



# BIRKENHEAD

**The Kauri Suburb**





# ZONING OF LAND DESIGNATED OR RESERVED FOR A PUBLIC WORK

The zoning of the land hereafter described shall take effect only after a Certificate pursuant to Section 33A of the Act indicates that the land is no longer required for a public work

- (1) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Post Office) in Mokoia Rd to be zoned Commercial B
- (2) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park, Car Park) between Mokoia Rd & Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (3) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park) in Hammond Place to be zoned Residential A
- (4) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Borough Offices) to be zoned Commercial B3
- (5) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park, Car Park) in Rawene Rd to be zoned Industrial B
- (6) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park) off Enterprise St to be zoned part Res. A, part Com. B, and part Ind. B
- (7) All other Reserves for National, Civic & Community purposes to be zoned Residential A
- (8) Service Lane between Rawene Rd & Huka Rd to be zoned Commercial B
- (9) All other Service Lanes to be zoned Commercial A
- (10) School (Existing Kindergarten) in Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (11) All other existing & proposed schools to be zoned Residential A
- (12) All existing & proposed Reserves to be zoned Residential A
- (13) All street widening & proposed streets to be zoned Residential A
- (14) Accessway between Mokoia Rd & Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (15) Service Lane

## NOTE

See Appendix J of the Code of Ordinances for detailed zoning and designations of land adjoining Mokoia Road, Hinemoa Street and Birkenhead Avenue Intersections (Highbury Corner)

Building Line Limit of Height  
Restriction relating to  
Hobsonville Airport  
Plan TP13260



# BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH DISTRICT SCHEME

FIRST REVIEW

SERIES DISTRICT PLANNING MAP

SUBJECT ZONING DESIGNATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

DRAWN JBM.  
CHECKED AAR  
DATE: May 69

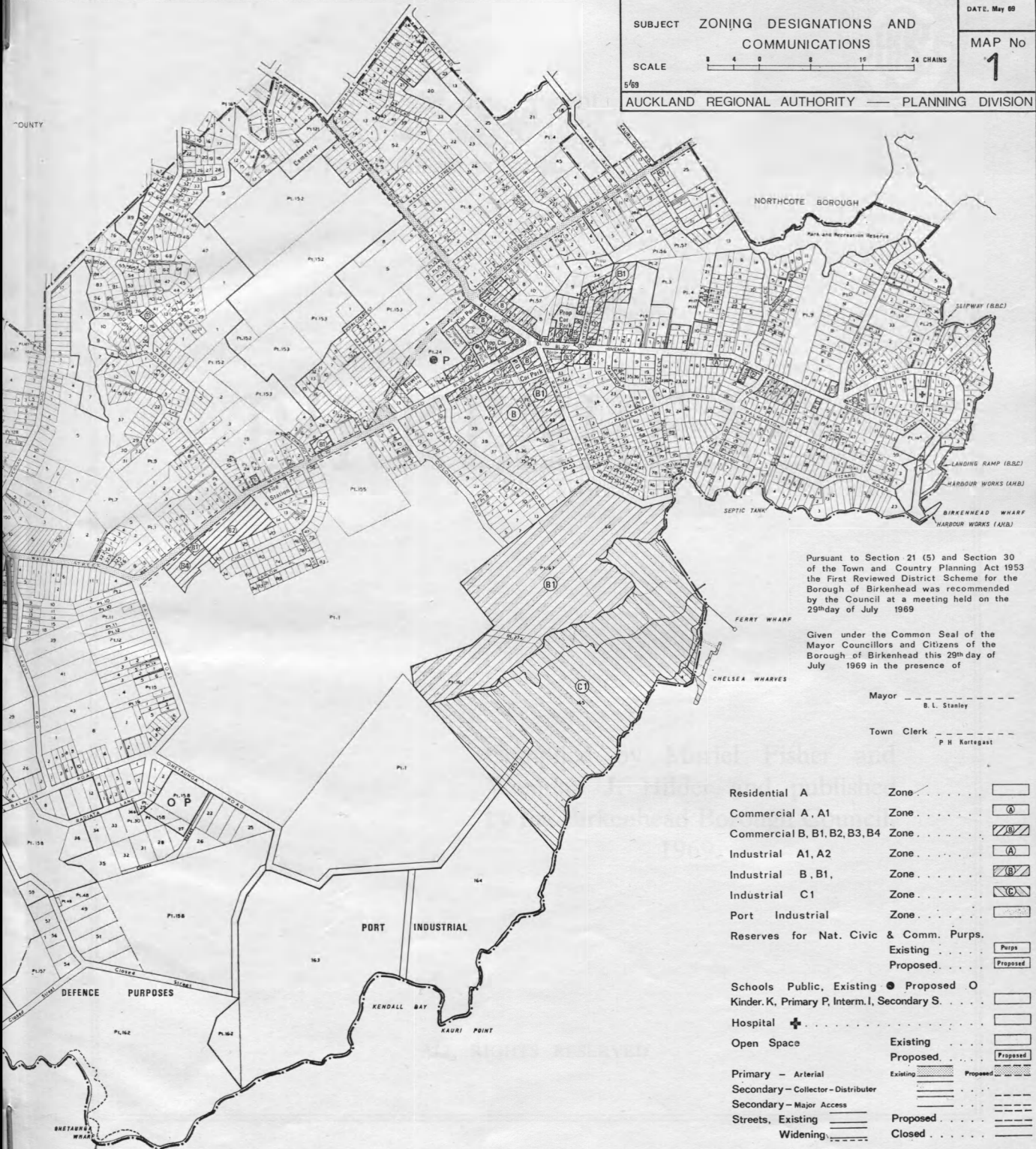
MAP No  
**1**

SCALE 0 4 8 16 24 CHAINS

5/69

AUCKLAND REGIONAL AUTHORITY — PLANNING DIVISION

COUNTY



Pursuant to Section 21 (5) and Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 the First Reviewed District Scheme for the Borough of Birkenhead was recommended by the Council at a meeting held on the 29th day of July 1969

Given under the Common Seal of the Mayor Councillors and Citizens of the Borough of Birkenhead this 29th day of July 1969 in the presence of

Mayor B. L. Stanley

Town Clerk P. H. Kortgeest

Residential A	Zone	
Commercial A, A1	Zone	
Commercial B, B1, B2, B3, B4	Zone	
Industrial A1, A2	Zone	
Industrial B, B1,	Zone	
Industrial C1	Zone	
Port Industrial	Zone	
Reserves for Nat. Civic & Comm. Purps.		
Existing		
Proposed		
Schools Public, Existing		
Kindergarten, Primary P, Intern. I, Secondary S.		
Hospital		
Open Space		
Existing		
Proposed		
Primary - Arterial		
Secondary - Collector-Distributor		
Secondary - Major Access		
Streets, Existing		
Proposed		
Widening		
Closed		
Service Lanes		
Building Lines		
District Boundary		



A history of the development,  
from the earliest days to 1968,  
of the North Shore borough of:

# BIRKENHEAD

Compiled by Muriel Fisher and  
Wenman J. Hilder and published  
by the Birkenhead Borough Council,  
1969.

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# EDITORIAL

198621

PALMERSTON NORTH

**L**ITTLE more than 100 years ago what is now Birkenhead was almost as wild and untamed as it must have been 10,000 years before. True, there were settlements of indigenous Maoris, just as there must have been settlements of another race before them, but development, so-called modern civilisation, as it has been known in Europe and the Far East for 10 centuries or more, was virtually unknown in this forest, fern, or tussock-covered land when Queen Victoria came to the throne.

So, almost within living memory, we have watched a relatively small, compact area in a primeval environment develop into a thriving, bustling 20th Century borough.

There is nothing unique about this but too often in such cases what has been seen almost at first hand has not been recorded and has eventually been forgotten.

It was for this reason that early in 1965 the then Mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe, and borough councillors of Birkenhead decided a history of the borough should be compiled, edited and published "before it was too late", before those who were to provide the historical details, who were to be asked to recall what happened or what their fathers had told them had happened before and since the borough was formed, had passed from us for ever.

## Good Choice

Having decided what it wanted, the Council chose two of the most suitable people in the borough to carry out the careful and serious research required for such a project: Mrs. Muriel Fisher, of Kauri Road, and Mr. W. J. "Bill" Hilder of Beachaven.

Mrs. Fisher, botanist and writer who specialises in indigenous flora, is the wife of a member of one of the oldest Birkenhead families. She has studied history and botany at both Victoria and Auckland universities, and painstaking collation of known facts is her way.

Mr. Hilder has been a leading figure in the borough, particularly at Beachaven and Birkdale, for nearly 45 years. Despite his 80-odd years, he is blessed with an unusually accurate and versatile memory, particularly for names and dates. He knows or is known by most of the older people in the borough and to thousands of the younger generations. He has served on the council and has always been closely associated with local affairs and local body people.

A book of this kind is rather like an iceberg. The final, visible result is only a fraction of the size of what lies beneath the surface, of the vast

quantity of research, compilation and compaction on which it floats.

To produce this vital foundation has been the work of Mrs. Fisher and Mr. Hilder. It has required perseverance and perception, and a sense of vocation. This they have supplied in full measure.

Mrs. Fisher and Mr. Hilder, I know, would wish me, on their behalf, to thank all those who have helped them in their research: Government departments, local bodies, clubs and associations, many Birkenhead people and, in particular, Mr. Tom Walsh of Takapuna, an authority on the history of the North Shore.

It is inevitable in a work of this kind that there will be gaps and misunderstandings, a date wrong here perhaps, an initial left out there.

The chapters in this book are based on information culled from numerous sources. Inaccuracies may have crept in but certainly not intentionally. If anyone believes or knows that someone or something has been left out, the compilers and editor apologise sincerely and ask that the publishers be informed so that in any future publication of this sort, the correct information can be included.

What may seem important and worthy of being remembered today was all too often regarded as nothing unusual when it happened, so that little or nothing was recorded and specific details were soon forgotten. However, a great deal of trouble has been taken to try to fill in the gaps and check any possible inaccuracies. Though not always successful the result has been very rewarding to those responsible for its publication, the Mayor, Mr. B. L. Stanley, the members of the Council (particularly the members of the Civic Amenities Committee), the Town Clerk, Mr. P. H. Kortegast, and myself who accepted the fascinating task of putting it all together for the printer.

We hope it will prove just as rewarding and satisfying to those who have waited so patiently for its appearance in book form.

Geoffrey Soutar  
August, 1969.



B. L. Stanley, Esq., J.P., Mayor  
1968-1970



Mrs. Muriel Fisher, co-author with . . .



Mr. W. J. Hilder.

#### COVER PICTURE:

Aerial view of Birkenhead  
looking north west from  
Auckland City.

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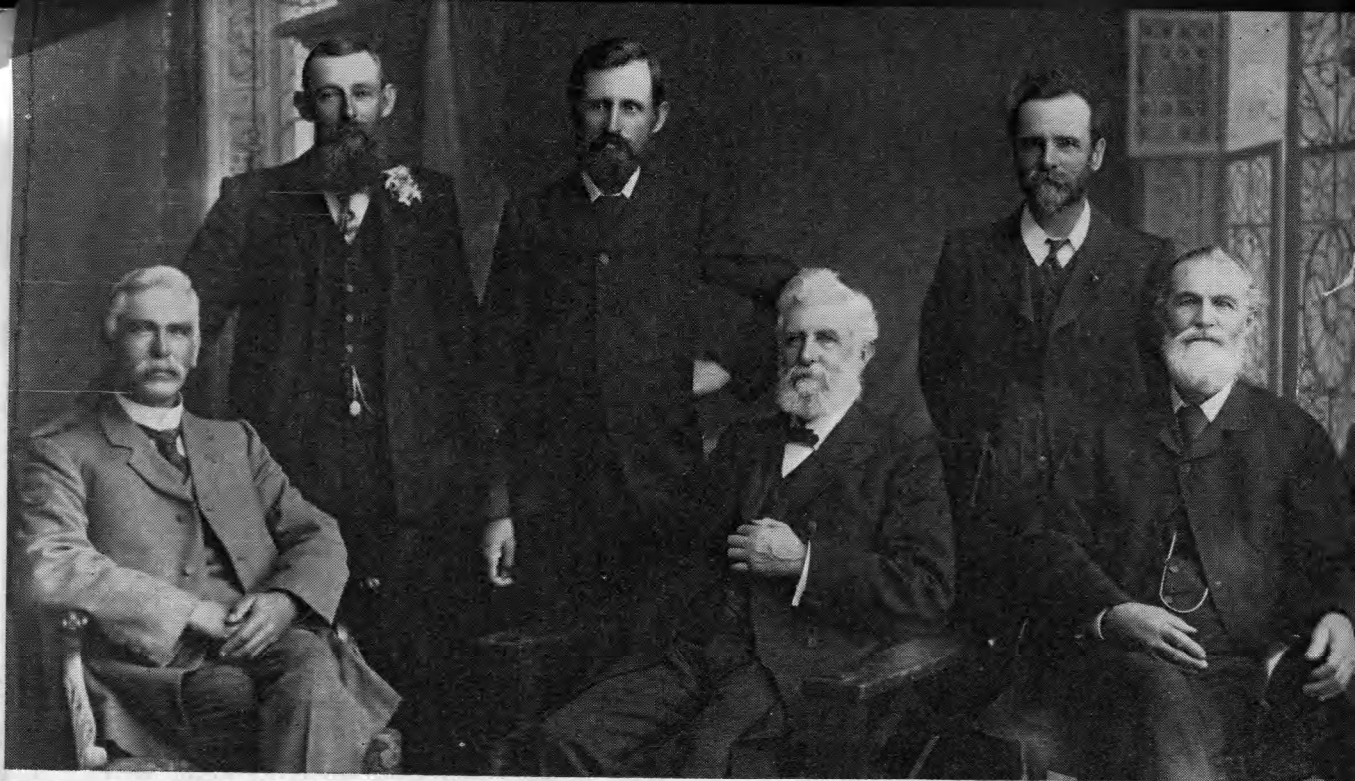
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Birkenhead's first borough council (above) left to right: E. J. White, B. T. Hawkins, J. G. Kay, C. E. Button, Mayor, Tom Hadfield, and A. F. Porter. The Council 1968-1971 (below) back row: T. H. Davidson, J. McMichael, Borough Engineer, P. H. Kortegast, Town Clerk, G. Alder, R. V. Pullen, C. H. W. Ashton, and H. Tuwhare. Front row: A. M. Nola, L. J. Lanigan, Deputy-Mayor, B. L. Stanley, Mayor, Mrs. N. J. Bourke and W. R. Garrett.





## In the beginning . . .

THE Maori people have a proverb: \**"Women and land are the reason men die."* Nine words only, yet nothing could describe so simply yet so forcefully the spirit that pervaded, a little more than a century ago, the land that was to become the borough of Birkenhead.

At least it can be said of the Pakeha that he did not destroy the Maori in and around Birkenhead. As history records, and in a later chapter the story will be told, Birkenhead was part of a widespread battleground throughout which the Maori came near to destroying himself.

It was from the ashes of the ravished Birkenhead and Waitemata tribal lands that the Pakeha built the orchards and gardens that supplied the young City of Auckland with much of its fruit and vegetables.

In more recent times, since 1945, the most noticeable feature of the Birkenhead scene, is the rapid and total change from what was virtually a large and luscious strawberry patch to the streets of family homes — and young family homes at that — of one of the fastest growing and most popular of Auckland City's dormitory suburbs.

In fact even today, re-translated into a more modern idiom: "A family and land is the reason why men strive," the old proverb would be just as apt even though a vastly different kind of people to either the old time, warring Maori or the fruit growing pioneer have laid the imprint of their striving on this sheltered and lovely borough.

IN PRE-PAKEHA times, what was later to become Birkenhead was part of one of the most important and traditional fields of battle among Maori tribes. This aspect of Birkenhead's history, this inclusion of the Birkenhead territory in the history of New Zealand, is not as well known as it should be. Perhaps that it all happened before written history is some excuse.

The earliest Pakeha settlers, many of whom lived in nikau whares, had to walk along a track

\**"He wahine he whenua, i mate ai te tangata."*

One of the fine kauri pine trees in Kauri Park. Standing at the base is the 1968 chairman of the Civic Amenities Committee, Mr. A. M. Nola.



from Birkenhead to Devonport to get fresh supplies or transact any business.

If they wished to go to Auckland, they walked to Northcote (Stokes Point as it was then known), and crossed by rowing boat to the young Auckland city. Those were the days when people going to town wore an old pair of boots, carried their good ones, and changed at the wharf.

Tracks and roads in the winter were a sea of mud.

In those days, water had to be carried from streams to thatched roofed dwellings.

It was impossible to visit friends at night. The roads were too bad and lanterns scarce — meetings were held either in the afternoons or on moonlight nights.

Little of this Birkenhead, the Birkenhead of 85 to 100 years ago, can be seen today. Surprisingly — and fortunately — a few remnants of an even earlier Birkenhead are preserved in the three scenic reserves within the borough's boundaries.

It is not too difficult to walk through these reserves — Kauri Glen (24 acres), Kauri Park (20 acres) or Le Roy's Bush (14 acres) — and obtain a mental picture of the primeval land the Maori lived in and fought over for hundreds of years before the arrival of the European. More difficult but more intriguing, is to stand on Little Shoal Bay beach, take note of the hills and swamps and the cliff formation, and go back in imagination not hundreds, nor thousands, but millions of years.

## *Far back in time*

**T**HE geological history of Auckland extends far back into geological time. Rock, over 200 million years old forms the islands of Waiheke and Motutapu. On the North Shore, these ancient rocks are buried deeply under layers of much younger rock about 30 million years old. These beds of yellow and grey mudstones and sandstones were compressed under a deep sea and now form our most common rocks. During the period of their formation volcanoes erupted in the Waitakere area, producing mudflows and lahars, which became interbedded with the sandstones.

One bed of this hard resistant rock, called Parnell grit, can be seen near Birkenhead beach.

To the north, near Albany and Kaukapakapa, conglomerates consisting of pebbles of ancient rock, some similar to granite, were also formed.



Birkenhead's Lake Pupuke quarry, above which was the pump house. The quarry was sold in 1967.

About 15 million years ago, a mountain building period commenced which laid out the general outlines of New Zealand today.

In the Auckland district these movements appeared as block faulting where some sections of the land were pushed up, and other parts were lowered. Raised areas include the Hunua Hills and Coromandel Peninsula, and lowered areas include the Manukau lowlands, southern Kaipara Harbour and the Firth of Thames.

The Auckland area was not lowered enough for the soft sandstones to be covered by younger sediments, or raised high enough for them to be eroded away.

The Great Ice Age, really four ice ages with intervals of milder climate, exerted a great influence on parts of the world far away from the ice caps. The first ice age began about 1 million years ago. The climate became gradually colder and vast amounts of water became tied up in the great glaciers, so much that in places sea level fell 300 to 400 feet.

Thus, four times, as the glaciers grew, sea level fell and, as the glaciers melted, sea level rose. When sea level rose, the valleys were flooded by the sea and filled with mud and sand.

Whenever sea level remained constant for a time, waves cut back the cliffs to make gently sloping rock platforms along the shore.

AT ONE stage, when sea level was 250 feet above the present day level, flats were scarred by streams and the sea. These flats can be seen today as the main ridges and gullies of Birkenhead and other parts of the North Shore. By the time sea level had dropped to about 100 feet above present day sea level, submerged valleys were filled with pumice sands, silt and peat.

Much of the Shoal Bay — Takapuna area consists of such beds.

During the last ice age sea level fell to more than 300 feet below today's level. The Waitemata Harbour and the Hauraki Gulf were dry land. The Waitemata River had its channel cut down to 120 feet below today's sea level off North Head, and tributary streams cut deep valleys so they could join the main river smoothly.

—Mrs. H. Nicholson.

## *The Maori story*

TO obtain an overall picture of Maori life on the shores of the Upper Waitemata Harbour, it is necessary to overlook today's borough boundaries.

Very little seems to have been recorded on this subject, and if it were not for the late George Graham's articles in which he made an effort to piece together fragments of legendary history, there would have been little indeed to indicate what life was like before the advent of the Pakeha and his bush felling.

Let us put the clock back some 200 to 300 years and try to visualise the Birkenhead scene.

The bush would have extended to the water's edge. Papa rock would be largely hidden in those days, so thorough was nature's ornamentation. One can picture what a magnificent sight the Pohutukawas would have been in mid-summer, and ferns would have grown luxuriantly in sheltered positions in the steep coastal gullies. There would have been giant Kauri trees against the sky-line — not the exotic pines there today — even though, most probably, fire had destroyed some of the beautiful bush during the many inter-tribal wars.

UNCEASING tribal conflicts marked the long history of the Auckland isthmus and in the latter

part of the 18th Century, the area was abandoned. No tribe was able to remain strong enough to withstand the attacks which were made upon this much fought-for piece of land.

What is now known as Northcote Point, was in those days a pallsided and entrenched, fortified village, known as Onewa, and a little further up the harbour at the spot known as the Needle's Eye (near today's Birkenhead wharf) there was a small Maori settlement.

The Ngati-tai tribe occupied most of the area now known as the Waitemata County and it was frequently raided by the Kaipara tribe (Ngati-whatua).

Inter-tribal warfare was almost continuous and virtually amounted to a repetition of attacks and captures.

An important area to the old-time Maori was what is now known as Kauri Point. It is the most conspicuous of the many headlands in the Upper Waitemata Harbour. In those days it was called Te Matarae-a-mana, which translated means Mana's Brow or Headland. It was presided over by a Chief called Te Mana.

Some 20 years before Captain Cook's first visit to New Zealand, according to a Maori historian, "The Maori village was a kind of Maori Lowestoff whence the canoe fleets went fishing the waters of the Upper Waitemata. In season large hauls of shark and other fish in the Maori diet were caught and dried for winter use.

"At those times the population of Te Matarae and other fishing villages in the vicinity was considerably increased by visiting parties from surrounding districts. In fact, so famous were the shark fisheries near Matarae, that canoe fleets came from as far away as Thames."

Still further up the harbour towards Riverhead, one cannot fail to notice a prominent landmark known locally as the Devil's Back. Its natural situation and height, bounded on the one side by the main waterway, the other by Hellyers Creek, made it an easily defended stronghold. What could be described as a major war stemmed from the actions of a well-known chief at the time named Kiwi. He was a brother-in-law of Te Mana the chief at Te Matarae (Kauri Point).

All was peaceful till Kiwi visited the Kaipara tribe. There he suffered some real or imaginary offence at the hands of the Kaipara people.

Intent on revenge, he killed some of his host's people and for good measure murdered some Kaipara women who were gathering shellfish at the mouth of the Te Whau stream.



This so enraged the Kaipara tribe that they invaded the pas and fortified villages on the Waitemata, by both war canoe and overland from Riverhead.

Kiwi was killed and the tribes along the shores of the Waitemata scattered.

By the end of the 18th century, the remnants of the tribes had again settled at their respective pas — namely, Onewa, Te Matarae-a-mana and Tauhinu (The Devil's Back).

For about 20 years there was peace. Then, unfortunately for the remaining members of the once-powerful tribes on the shores of the Waitemata, Hone Heke returned from England with firearms and a strong desire to become famous. He immediately set out to right some wrong he considered had been inflicted on his tribe by the people of the Waitemata tribes.

Large numbers of these people were killed, but a few managed to take refuge in the recesses of the forests which covered the district.

Gradually the influence of the missionaries took effect and by the 1830s, tribes which had hitherto been enemies made peace. Those who escaped Hone's firearms returned from their hiding places and ancestral homes were occupied again.

Te Matarae (Kauri Point) was again the scene of a Maori community which lived peacefully, reviving a reputation for fishing in the fruitful waters of the Upper Waitemata until 1844 when the area was sold to the Pakeha government and the once important ancestral home of Te Matarae became a deserted village, visited only by Pakeha picnickers and yachtsmen.

Just before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the remnants of another tribe had returned to Tauhinu, but a few years later they too, dispersed when their land was sold to the pakeha.

This story was repeated at Onewa which had been again inhabited by a few of the Ngati-tai tribe. It was here that the last chieftain Heteraka Takapuna resided, until the Point was sold to the government in 1841.

## *The Pakeha . . .*

CAPTAIN James Cook, R.N., while making and charting important geographical discoveries in the South Pacific did not chart that part of the coast which includes the Waitemata Harbour.

In November, 1769, however, Captain Cook sailed up the Firth of Thames and steered to-

wards Cape Rodney. Waiheke Island and the other islands of the Gulf would have been on his left and so one could assume the course that he took prevented him from seeing the Waitemata.

By the end of the 18th Century sealers and whalers had found their way to New Zealand and the felling of the Kauri forests had begun.

Early in the 19th Century the missionaries had found plenty with which to occupy themselves in this new land.

From their headquarters in the Bay of Islands they explored the country, mainly on foot, through virgin bush.

One of the best known missionaries, the Rev. Samuel Marsden is credited with being the first white man to sail up the Waitemata.

It is recorded that he was requested by the Governor of New South Wales to accompany an expedition sent to Coromandel to search for kauri spars.

Marsden was selected to accompany the expedition, which went by H.M.S. Dromedary and H.M. Storeship Coromandel, because of his knowledge of the Maoris and their respect for him.

THE TWO ships left the Bay of Islands on 7th June, 1820.

The return trip from Coromandel was made in a sailing launch in charge of a Mr. Anderson who was accompanied by a Government "Timber Purveyor", a Mr. Ewels. The route from Thames was up the Waiheke Channel and the night was spent in the shelter of one of the islands in the area.

The following account is taken from the documents relating to this interesting journey — July 26th, 1820:—

"This morning we weighed anchor and sailed up the Wyteematta (Waitemata) with a strong, fair breeze. The Wyteematta is a large river in some places 5 - 6 miles wide and runs direct towards the west side of New Zealand. We anchored about 5 o'clock in the evening near the shore, tying the launch with a rope to a tree. There were some fine spars, but not long enough for first-rate men-of-war."

Marsden relates that early the next morning a canoe manned by natives was paddled over to the launch. The party included a native chief named Te Kawau and, fortunately for the travellers, the Chief and his party were friendly disposed towards them.

Marsden then inquired of Te Kawau, if it were possible to reach the Kaipara in a day; the Chief replied in the affirmative and offered to show him the route.

Marsden gratefully accepted the offer and accompanied by Mr. Ewels, Government Timber Purveyor, they left the launch and embarked in the canoe in which there were 13 natives.

Beyond Pitoitoi or Riverhead, as it is now known, the party went 6 - 8 miles further up the river and after a hard day's journey spent the night at a native village — this was probably on the shores of the Kaipara Harbour.

When Marsden had sufficiently acquainted himself with this western shore of New Zealand, he then requested Te Kawau to return him to the launch which would carry him back to Coromandel.

Although the Chief was not anxious to leave so soon, he complied with Marsden's request and in very unpleasant conditions the party set out in squally wintry weather.

The journey down the Waitemata on the 30th July, 1820, was far from pleasant and as the day wore on the wind increased in strength.

The launch was sighted and although the young men who manned the canoe paddled with renewed vigour, the conditions worsened and it was resolved to go on shore and walk to Panmure where the launch was anchored.

In Marsden's own words "Although the natives told us it was too far to walk, we resolved to try our strength and succeeded in reaching Panmure that evening, where we met the launch and took up our lodgings for the night, not without feelings of pleasure and gratitude."

The year 1820 marks the beginning of events leading to the European settlement of the Waitemata. Twenty-one years later Governor Hobson officially purchased from the Maoris the whole of the North Shore as far north as Mahurangi on the east to the Kaipara Portage on the west.

The following is taken from "THE STORY OF DEVONPORT and THE OLD NORTH SHORE" by T. Walsh.

THE LAND comprising the Borough of Devonport was a part of a big land purchase made by the Governor (Captain Hobson) in 1840-41, about 12 months after the purchase of the site of the City of Auckland. The Mahurangi Block, the area purchased, extended from Takapuna (that is Devonport) to Te Arai on the east coast, and to

the central ridge that commencing to the head of the Waitemata, runs northward, forming the backbone of the northern part of the island: the total area of land dealt with was 9,500 acres. As there were several native tribes concerned in the ownership the purchase transactions extended over a number of years, but the ownership by the Crown was regarded as settled, and in 1844 the first areas between Northcote and the Lake were offered for auction. The first deed with the Maori owners was made in 1841, the final in 1854 (certain small land interests are still held by the Maoris beyond the Puhoi).

THE FOLLOWING translations of the deeds are self-explanatory:—

"Dated April 13, 1841.

"Ngatipaoa Interests.

"The chief and people of Ngatipaoa, Ngatimaru, Ngatitiamahera, Ngatiwhanaunga ceded and disposed of these places of ours (Mahurangi and Omaha) and the places lying within the boundaries described to Mr. Clarks, Protector of Aborigines, on behalf of the Queen of England her heirs or some man or woman who may be chosen by England to be King or Queen for ever. The land all the trees all the waters all the streams all the ditches all the fences all the forests (not already disposed of) upon or under the whole of this place of ours — Te Waimai a Te Tumu being excepted as a place of residence for us. The boundary commences at Te Arai thence inland to the ridge which runs inland it then descends to the source of the Whangaheau then up and down again to the source of the Waiwera-wera thence up and along the ridge to the hill on the boundary of Te Teira's place to the Wade it comes out at the Kaipara portage. Waitemata is the boundary on the south to its entrance the boundary on the south to its entrance on the east is the sea from the entrance to the Waitemata to Te Arai together with all the islands on the coast and all places not disposed of formerly within the boundaries described in this deed. We acknowledge the receipt of 400 blankets 60 cloaks £200 cash 60 gowns 2 horses 2 head of cattle 200 pairs of trousers 30 coats 100 caps 4 casks of tobacco 6 bags of flour 2 bags of rice 1 bag of sugar.

(Continued at the bottom of Page 10)

# The Pioneers...

**B**EFORE the European settlement of the Birkenhead district, seamen from visiting sailing ships used to row up the harbour along Hellyers Creek into the little bush-fringed inlet known as "The Lagoon" to collect fresh water from a waterfall there. This was before all the giant kauris were cut down in the area.

It has been recorded that in 1841 a Mr. Hellyer lived on the bank of the creek which now bears his name. He brewed beer which no doubt was a great incentive to those early seamen who rowed up the harbour, presumably for fresh water. The beer was sold at £4/10/- per hogshead.

Mr. Henry Hawkins was one of the first settlers in the district. He established an orchard near Soldiers Bay in the late 1840s or early 50s. About the turn of the century, his son lived in Hauraki Street. More recently his grandson kept a fruit shop which was just about opposite the present Birkenhead Borough Council office.

Another early settler was Mr. Philip Callan who in 1853 bought 76 acres in the Glenfield-Eskdale Road area. In 1861 he gave three acres to Bishop Pompallier. This is now the Roman Catholic cemetery.

About 1856, a Captain de Jersey Grut farmed where the Chelsea sugar refinery now is.

Some of the other early Crown Grants were:

Sixty-seven acres which embraced the area from Rangitira Road - Beach Road and Soldiers Bay, sold to William Brown in 1845 for £135;

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(Continued from Page 9)

"Dated at Waitemata. April 13, 1841.

KO PAORA  
NO NGAKETE  
KO POUROTO  
(19 other signatures)

Witnesses: CAPT. ROUGH, Harbour  
Master,

JNO. S. MONTEFIORE,  
J. COATES,  
HENRY TUCKER.

---

"Date: May 31, 1841.

"Patuone's Interests:

"My place and all the places of my tribe  
for one vessel and £50 cash."

The top part of Rangitira Road and a piece of Victoria Road West to the coast, in all 21 acres, went to Clement Partridge for £87/6/6 in 1845;

One hundred and ten acres of what is now Balmain and Domain Roads to the shore sold to James Woolly for £220—in 1845.

## ABSENT OWNERS

It is significant that the most eagerly sought land was that which had a sea frontage. It should be noted however that the owner of the various lots that were sold did not necessarily settle here.

William Smellie Grahame, for example, was a merchant from Sydney who bought much land in the Hokianga District as well as 115 acres round what is now Verrans Corner - Waipa Street area. (A photostat of the early deed appears in this book.)

One interesting fact is that in 1844-45 (about the time of the Crown Grants) introduced thistle had become so widespread that the Government requested new settlers to take action. Some 20 years later, a notice appeared in the newspaper calling for tenders for eradicating the thistles!

Without doubt, the first pioneer settlers, most of whom came from the north to escape Hone Heke's war, set themselves a hard task. Those who chose Birkenhead probably had a harder struggle than those who settled elsewhere on the Shore.

Birkenhead is hilly, broken country quite devoid of rich soil. In fact, much of it is white pipe clay with a hard ironstone pan—typical spent gumlands—with most of the nourishment drained from it by the giant kauris which grew here over the centuries.

Settlement was slow—very slow in comparison with other parts of the Shore.

Devonport, or Flagstaff as it was originally called, had a resident signalman in 1842, but not until eight years later were farms offered for sale. Names which will ever be associated with Devonport, Duder (the signalman) and Allison (afterwards the founder of the ferry company) were two of the purchasers of the original farms.

Unlike Birkenhead, however, Devonport and Takapuna land had not been covered in giant kauris, but tea-tree and flax, the latter particularly along the sea front from what is now Hauraki Road to the Okura River. Much of Takapuna's soil is volcanic and fertile. Good crops of wheat, maize and oats were grown. Also model dairy farms sprang up from Barry's Point to around Pupuke Lake.



## NINE ON ROLL

In spite of the fertility of the soil and the fact that the land itself was not difficult to work, settlement was fairly slow, there being only nine people eligible to vote in Takapuna in 1870. Even 20 years later, there were only three houses along the waterfront to Milford.

To obtain an insight into conditions prevailing in and around Auckland in its infancy, one has only to turn to the newspapers of the times.

The earliest newspaper in Auckland was "The New Zealander" and was published every Saturday. It cost 6d. per copy.

After a close perusal of these papers in the year 1845, one fact stands out significantly—in the Hokianga district, Hone Heke was making life very unpleasant and the settlers lived in fear and dread of this great Maori warrior.

On Saturday, August 30, 1845, "The New Zealander" reported:

"The proximity of this port (Hokianga) on the western coast to the seat of warfare, exclusive of its being a great mart for Kauri spars and Kauri gum, calls for particular attention. The establishment of some force at Hokianga,

either naval or military, would be productive of beneficial effect in suppressing inclination of those natives who would want to join Heke."

A study of the Crown Grants about this time reveals that a number of those who took up land in the Birkenhead district came from Hokianga.

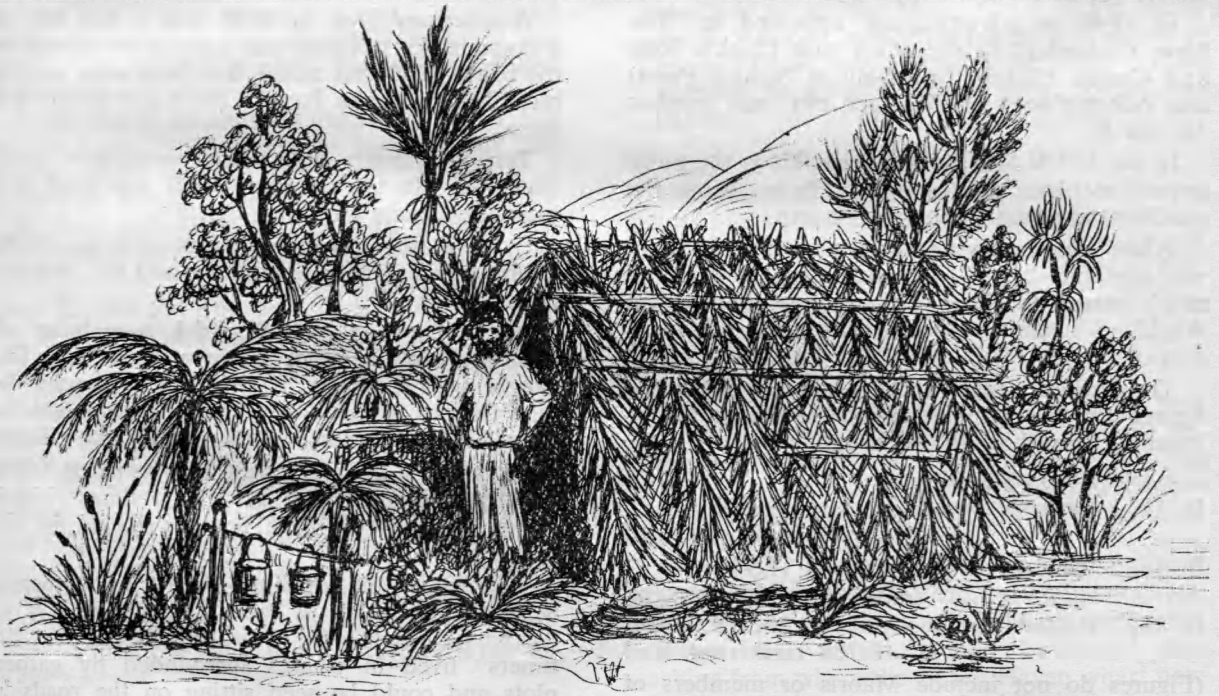
The first mention of any settlement on the North Shore appeared in the issue of December 20, 1845, of "The New Zealander".

Then, as now, there were burglaries; and so it was reported that the industrious settlers in the district of Takapuna "suffer much annoyance as well as loss of property from continual depredation of their pigs, poultry and vegetables".

## GOOD CROPS

Reading on further, one is told the year 1846 was a good one for the farmers round Auckland—"Clovers are astonishing in their growth—Crops of potatoes have been abundant and of excellent quality".

On May 30, 1846, "The New Zealander" discusses the scarcity of labour and suggests: "With every facility to obtain the necessities and comforts of life exceedingly cheap and in great



Sketch by Mrs. Rosalie Logan of a nikau whare. This was a rain proof shelter made from the nikau palm leaves. The pioneers learned how to build them from the Maori. Many pioneer babies were born in a larger version of this whare.

abundance, the Waitemata district is one of the most favourable locations for the labouring classes of all trades and description."

The price of various commodities in the mid-1840s: Eggs 1/- a dozen, beef 6d. a pound, milk 4d. a quart, a 2-pound loaf was 5d. Horses were £20 to £40—a lot of money in those days—and cows £8 to £10.

The first auction sale of North Shore land was on September 18, 1843, when sections 1 - 70 at Northcote - Birkenhead and the west side of Shoal Bay were offered for £2 per acre, 10% deposit and balance in one month.

First publican's licence on the North Shore was secured by J. O'Brien in 1843. The old hotel must have been somewhere behind Northcote and more over towards Barry's Point.

The licence set out that the inn had two sleeping rooms, but no stable and the proprietor had one boat.

The earliest industry on the North Shore was brickmaking at Stanley Bay and at Northcote.

A Mr. Hammond operated one of the brickworks in 1844 and until 1900 this part of the Shore was known as Brick Bay.

In 1848 an advertisement appeared in "The New Zealander" to the effect that Clark's Soap and Candle Factory (probably at Stoke's Point) was offering soap at 24/- per cwt. and candles 5d. per lb.

In the 1850s Stoke's Point was much the more important place on the North Shore, being the southern terminus of the road north.

When a permanent ferry service to the Shore was introduced in 1854, apparently it was not of much interest to either of the papers published in Auckland at the time, for neither made any mention of the fact.

The earliest census returns did not show the figures for the population of the North Shore separate from those of Auckland.

A summary records:

In 1851 the total population was 9,430

—3,214 could not read

In 1855 the total population was 11,919

—4,056 could not read

In 1857 the total population was 15,518

—3,984 could not read

(Figures do not include Maoris or members of military units.)

A landing stage was erected by Mr. P. Callan at Stoke's Point for £328 in the early 1850s.

For the year ending January 30, 1858, the

number of passengers that used the North Shore ferries was 6,046 persons.

Under the amendment of the Licensing Act, 1858, trust licences were granted to: R. Barry, Takapuna Hotel, Barry's Point; Philip Callan, North Auckland Hotel, Stoke's Point; and James Holmes, Flagstaff.

### NEAR LANDINGS

These first hotels were situated at the respective ferry landings.

In the early 1860s, Maurice Kelly, who owned the Wade Hotel, used to celebrate St. Patrick's Day by organising horse races. This proved very popular and attracted settlers from far and near.

In 1863 a grant was made for roads from "East Coast to Great North Road".

By 1864, farming land on the North Shore was selling at £8 per acre.

After the war with Hone Heke and others in the North ended, the Government gave an area of land between Takapuna and Devonport to Patuone, with fishing rights to all his people, as a recognition of his services. Europeans have since gradually acquired ownership of all the grant. Patuone died in 1872.

Anniversary Day in 1864 was a big day at Takapuna, for not only was there horse-racing on the beach (£20 first prize), but there were rowing races held on Lake Pupuke (with a boat for first prize).

Ten whaleboats and seven watermen's boats competed. In the evening a ball was held in a marquee, tickets for which cost 5/-.

In 1860 the newspaper agents for the North Shore were P. Heath, Shoal Bay; and Mr. Hellyer, Lucas Creek.

In 1860 when H.M.S. Brisk was lying off Stanley Point, a sailor using a chain and line caught a 20 ft. shark. A newspaper reported the monster was so large that "the sailor was able to insert his body into its mouth—after it was killed!"

Licences to kill game were first issued in 1868. Captain Wynyard and A. H. Gollings, North Shore, holding the first licences issued in the district.

The last of the old-time Maoris in Takapuna held a large block of land from Shoal Bay to Takapuna beach. As late as 1895, six of the "old timers" lived in whares surrounded by garden plots and could be seen sitting on the roadside watching passers-by. Some of those who passed would toss over a plug of tobacco, but Mr. (later Sir Henry) Brett was their favourite, for he threw many a cigar to them.

Northcote's claim to fame in the early days was that it was the gate to the north and the nearest point to Auckland. Northcote has the distinction of having the first auction of land on the North Shore and this took place on September 18, 1843. Northcote also had the first school apart from a small private one at Takapuna. Like her neighbour, Birkenhead, Northcote became a great strawberry-growing region.

The earliest settlers had the enormous task of clearing the bush before building themselves some sort of dwelling. It was not everybody who could afford to build a wooden house to begin with and it was not unusual for them to construct a bush shanty with sod walls and chimney and a raupo or nikau thatched roof. The forbears of many of today's Birkenhead people were born in such places.

As they cleared the land, the settlers often came across worthwhile deposits of kauri gum, the sale of which enabled them to buy much-needed manure for the impoverished soil.

The first wooden houses were made of pit-sawn kauri timber with split shingle roofs and large open fireplaces over which iron racks were placed. On the racks were hooks on which to hang the handles of large iron kettles. Camp ovens and iron-legged pots were also in vogue and a stack of wood was always kept standing nearby. Bacon was smoked in the chimney piece.

Water was sometimes obtained from a well, but usually it was carried from the nearby creek and in the winter wooden barrels caught the roof water from the spouting.

In those days there was no bath or bathroom and on Saturday nights the fire was stoked up while kerosene tins of water were placed on hooks hanging from the iron bar which went from one end of the fireplace to the other.

### **HIP BATH**

Many a settler's wife was proud of her bath which was a wooden hogshead beer barrel, cut neatly in half and painted.

In addition to building their homes, the settlers had the tremendous task of breaking in the land, most of which was by then covered with second growth tea-tree scrub. Before ploughing could commence, it was necessary to clear the scrub. This was a winter chore when it was cut with a slasher and left to dry when it would be burnt off in the summer.

Often the ploughing was done by bullocks. A man would follow the plough with spade and hanging bag and pick up the gum as it was ploughed out. Often the women and children would help, following the plough, eager to pick

up any gum that came to the surface.

The smaller nuts of gum were eagerly gathered up by the children. The proceeds of this sometimes gave them pocket money. Gum scraping with a knife was a job for parents on a wet day or at night.

In the early 1860s, the Maori wars were a disturbing factor in the minds of Auckland people.

In August, 1863, a public meeting of all North Shore residents was held to consider the best means of providing for the defence of the district. By October, 1863, the settlers of Devonport had organised a Volunteer Corps to do night patrol along the northern shores of the harbour.

There was, however, one comforting factor: the Maori chief, Patuone, who had been converted to Christianity by the Methodists, remained a faithful friend to the Colonists all his life. The following extract from an editorial in the New Zealand Herald in December, 1863, alludes to the contrast between the wintry conditions many of the settlers were used to at Yuletide in Europe and the summer season here. But at least one thing remained the same: the spirit of goodwill.

The article continued thus—

"It has been for some years an interesting spectacle to see the Maori Chief of the North Shore, Patuone, gather his friends and acquaintances around him and offer the same cordial welcome to all—rich and poor, Maori and Pakeha."

### **BOROUGH NAMED**

The year 1863 was an important one in the history of Birkenhead. On June 23, Samuel Cochran, an Agent, Broker and Auctioneer, registered this district as "Birkenhead" in the office of Ridings and Dowden, Auckland. He named it Birkenhead because it reminded him of his home town 'being across the water as Birkenhead is from Liverpool'.

The Birkenhead settlers discovered that the land was not conducive to dairy farming, although admittedly there have been several noteworthy farms in the district. It would, however, grow fruit—and grow fruit abundantly it has done for over half a century.

In the early 1870s W. F. Hammond described the scene on the southern side of Hellyers Creek where, he said, there was a large Maori settlement.

Whares were dotted about on cultivated plots reaching from where the Beach Haven wharf now is to the Chief's whare on the hill at the source of the creek.

About 1875 the River Plate Co. came into existence. This Company intended to connect Birkenhead by tramway with other boroughs on



the Shore, but the idea was abandoned during the depression of the 1880s.

Incidentally, that is how Tramway Road, Beach Haven, got its name, for it would have been the terminus if the scheme had materialised.

From the time the Colonial Sugar Refining Company was established at Chelsea in the early 1880s, Birkenhead's development speeded up and it is safe to say that the majority of the persons employed at the works were residents of the area. This growth soon resulted in Birkenhead being proclaimed a Borough in 1887.

The Cyclopaedia of N.Z. (1901) says, "Birkenhead is a large residential suburb situated about 3 miles to the north-west of Auckland, across the Waitemata Harbour. It has an area of 2,697 acres and contains 278 ratable properties owned by 252 ratepayers. The population of the Borough is 1,087 persons."

As there was no hard metal in the district, the Council employed scows to bring this necessary material from Rangitoto Island for the roads. Later the Council made use of the cinders from the Chelsea Refinery and so every road in the Borough had its coating of "Sugar Works ash".

At this time on the 1901 Electors' Roll for the Borough of Birkenhead are many names that are familiar today. For example: Walter and Isabella Bagot, Henry Beere, Lawrence and Annabella Clow, Charles and Annie Chambers, John and Mary Day, James and Sarah Dacre, Frank and Jane Fisher, Emily and Francis Fowler, George and William Goodall, David and Annie Heron, Charles Harken, Joshua and John Hadfield, Joseph and Annie Jenkinson, Edwin and Emma Jessop, James le Vesque, Richard Messenger, Thomas and William Metcalf, George and Annie Mayall, William McCullough, Isaac Newton, Frederick and Sarah Pugh, Abraham Roberts, Stephen Rountree, Thos. and Laura Shepherd, David and Frances Swindail, James Speedy, E. F. Tizard, William and George Wallace.

## *The Gum Diggers*

THE following advertisement appeared in "The New Zealander" one day in March, 1845:—

### KAURI GUM

Tenders will be received by the undersigned until 1st April for 20 tons best quality kauri gum to be substantially packed in native baskets and delivered within 3 months from this date.

Cash on delivery.

Signed: John Montifiore  
Auckland.

On mentioning kauri gum, one immediately thinks of the gumfields of Northland and it is not generally known that in the early days, the North Shore contained much gum — some of very good quality.

In the past the major portion of the area now known as the North Shore must have been a vast kauri forest. Even at the time of the early settlers' arrival the kauri was a feature of the landscape. Unfortunately, however, the same methods were applied there as in the north. Only a small proportion of the best timber was removed and utilised, most of it was burnt on the spot.

### FIRES

A well-known statesman of the last century was reported as saying "a swagger would burn down a forest to light his pipe". This may seem an exaggeration, though it is true that many of the finest kauri forests in the country have been destroyed by such acts of carelessness.

Some of the older people of Birkenhead can remember their parents speaking of the huge forest fires which blazed for weeks on end "over the back of Birkenhead". This would have been in the 1870s.

Wherever there had been a kauri forest, there will be fossil gum and, with the exception of the volcanic land around Mount Victoria and Takapuna, an area including Stanley Point, Northcote, Birkenhead and all land to the north had varying quantities of gum.

With the coming of the early settlers and the opening of the kauri gum markets, Maoris also took to gum digging and it was a common sight to see many of the menfolk making for the gumfields which lay west of the Wairau Creek.

At the end of the day, they would be seen returning with full pikau (canvas bag with straps which was carried like a haversack), sometimes calling at the settlers' homes where they often bought farm produce such as butter and eggs, and perhaps were given a cup of tea and a batch of scones made by the settlers' wives. In return, the settlers would be given some fresh fish or mussels.

A number of the gumdiggers were elderly men, for most of the younger ones were engaged in bush felling. In those days, there was no "Age benefit" or Social Security and those who were too independent to accept charity could usually make money from the gumfields.

Many of the men who resorted to digging for gum were from the city and down on their luck.

### FAMILY HOME

In many cases their wives and families went with them and lived in shanties built of sod walls and thatched with nikau and raupo.

The shanties were about 8 feet by 10 feet and at one end a boxed-in bed frame was built. This was filled with a springy native fern which the Maoris called Mangemange. The settlers named it 'Bushmen's Mattress'. Botanically, it is known as *Lygodium articulatum*. With a good fire burning in the open fireplace, the huts could be quite snug and cosy.

When a new "chum" came on the gumfields, it was a regular procedure for him to approach the storekeeper who would set him up with the necessities, a tent, spade, spear and gum knife, camp utensils and a week's "tucker". It was a gentleman's agreement by which the digger was to supply all gum to the storekeeper till the debt was paid off and trade nowhere else.

Camps became established at the head of sheltered gullies where plenty of fresh water was handy and as near as possible to the road so that the gum dealer could bring stores and buy gum. If possible, it was an advantage to be near the coast so that the diggers could catch fish to supplement their food supply.

A Mr. Wheeler was the last person to obtain a permit to dig kauri gum around Verrans Corner. This was during the depression of the early 1930s.

Towards the middle of the 1880s, when there was a more regular ferry service to Birkenhead and Northcote, dozens of men would come over every morning to spend the day on the gumfields, within easy walking distance. Some returned towards late afternoon, while others remained in the district and would return on Saturday morning when they took their gum to a dealer in the City.

In the last quarter of the 19th Century, several gum dealers established themselves on the North Shore. One such was at the corner of Sunset Road and Glenfield Road where a small store was kept by David Heron. Further out, near Albany, Messrs. Stephenson and Phillips set themselves up in business. Another ran a hotel in conjunction with gumdealing and the other had a general store and bakery. With large camps in the Lucas Creek and Snapper Rock area, these enterprising dealers did a good trade.

Alexander Stephenson settled in the district in about 1850.

### QUIET PLACE

An Albany pioneer in the early 1890s later described Albany as "a quiet little village situated in a valley surrounded by hills. The narrow, clay road divided at the hall, where there was a huge

finger post with Northcote on one of its arms and Devonport on the other. Both roads were clay and full of ruts made by wheels of bullock drays as they hauled out the huge kauri logs. Most of the ground was full of great kauri stumps which had to be removed before ploughing."

She described the population at this period—"The majority of the inhabitants were Maoris who lived in their own little settlement by a fresh-water creek. Their whares were made of tea-tree and raupo with sods of earth. It was a common sight to see parties of Maoris making for the gumfields. The women folk always wore shawls round their shoulders and these served a double purpose, for as well as carrying their baby in the shawl, they could also put provisions in it. It was not unusual for them to carry a little pet pig as well, for apparently they made great pets of their pigs and many a Wahine (Maori woman) has shown me with obvious pride a tiny piglet nesting in her shawl."

Further north also, of course, was a great area for gumdiggers about this time. Areas known as the Horse Shoe Bush from which timber was bullock-hauled to Riverhead, and all the area now known as Dairy Flat to the Wade (Silverdale) was heavily forested in those days.

### MILFORD A CENTRE

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that Milford was in the centre of a gumdigging area and the industry was carried on over all the land now known as the East Coast Bays. In fact, in a gully near Campbell's Bay there existed a gumdiggers' camp till as late as 1910. Joe Sheriff was the dealer on this part of the shore and regularly he would take his horse and trap to the camps on Saturday, laden with provisions, returning with a load of gum. His store was in Milford and the name Sheriff's Hill is still referred to today.

The gum was graded, best quality sold for 2/6 a pound, nuts 5d. and dust 3d. a pound. As far as can be ascertained, this was the price prevailing about the turn of the century. Often one would get pieces of clear, transparent gum called specimen gum. This was really something special and would demand high prices as a curio or ornament.

The largest piece of gum found in the Birkdale district weighed just over 20 pounds. This was found about the time of the First World War.

Until almost recent times, the old gumdiggers' track over the Devil's Back through the back of Birkdale over to Chelsea was discernable.



**T**HE changing boundaries of local body administrative areas led to Birkenhead becoming a borough. At one point part of a county, part of a highway district, and part of a roads board.

In the early 1840's, when the Auckland Provincial Government bought large tracts of North Shore land, scattered pockets of settlers were soon established. To begin with, the administration of these was the responsibility of the provincial government.

To relieve this body of some of its work and to enable the settlers to look after their own affairs, two acts were passed by the central government in 1871: The Highway Boards Empowering Act, and the Highways Act. This legislation allowed any group of settlements to join and be proclaimed a Highways District administered by a board with the power to rate the settlers in the district to pay for the formation and maintenance of their roads.

When the Waitemata County was formed in 1876 it included all the North Shore. Although some highway districts, which were regarded as part of the county were included, the administration of local roads remained independent of county control.

A further step was taken in 1882 by the passing of the Roads Board Act which permitted an increase in the number of road boards and their later separation from the county.

Birkenhead was one of these and originally included Northcote and Greenhithe. Northcote became a separate board in 1884 and Greenhithe was separated from Birkenhead in 1886, leaving the Birkenhead Roads Board boundaries somewhat the same as the borough's are today.

The final step was taken on April 11, 1888, when, acting on a petition from the people of the board's district, the Birkenhead Roads Board was proclaimed a borough.

The following is a copy of the Gazette notice of April 12, 1888 (No. 24).

## Proclamation

Whereas by "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886" the Governor is empowered, by Proclamation, to declare any portion of the Colony of New Zealand to be a Borough under the said Act from and after a date to be named in such Proclamation.

Now, therefore, I William Francis Drummond Jervois, the Governor of the said Colony of New Zealand, in pursuance and exercise of the powers and authorities vested in me by the said Act, do hereby proclaim and declare that the part of the Birkenhead Road District described in the Schedule hereto shall be and the same is hereby constituted, as from the date hereof a borough under the said Act: and I do further declare that the name of such borough shall be the Borough of Birkenhead, that the number of councillors of the said borough shall be six, and the boundaries of the said borough shall be those described in the Schedule hereto.

### Schedule

All that area in the Provincial District of Auckland bounded towards the north by Hellyers Creek and towards the south and south-west by the Waitemata Harbour.

Given under the hand of His Excellency Sir William Francis Drummond Jervois Lieutenant General KG., V.C., and issued under the Seal of the said Colony, at the Government house at Wellington, this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord, 1888.

— T. W. Hislop.





An old picture of Northcote, across little Shoal Bay, taken from the Birkenhead side of what is now known as Le Roy's Bush, about 1901.

### Advertisements in "The Auckland Evening Star" of May 9th, 1888.

Borough of Birkenhead, Mayoralty Election. Charles Edward Button, Esqre, being the only Candidate this day nominated for the office of Mayor for the above Borough, I declare that gentleman to be duly elected.

—Thomas Seaman, Returning Officer.

### Advertisement in "New Zealand Herald" of May 11th, 1888

Borough of Birkenhead, Election of Councillors. Messrs. Tom Hadfield, Benjamin Tapscott Hawkins, Robert George Hill, John Green Kay, Albert Frederick Porter, and Edward James White being the only six Candidates nominated This Day for the Office of Councillors for the Birkenhead Borough, and being the number required, I declare those gentlemen to be duly elected. — Thomas Seaman, Returning Officer.

At the first council meeting, on May 10, 1888, the Town Clerk submitted the estimates which he proposed for the council's expenditure for the current year. With some slight alterations, they were approved unanimously.

### Expenditure

Share of Government Debentures	£73	3	4
Departmental Expenses, i.e. salary of Town Clerk, Treasurer, Collector, Returning Officer & Valuator, also clerk & Presiding Officer for Licensing District - - - - -	42	0	0
Office Rent, Advertising, Stationery, etc. - - - - -	12	0	0
Contribution to Hospitals Charitable aid being one-tenth of a penny in the £ on capital Value of £92-14-2 - - -	38	7	10
Road Construction & Maintenance - - - - -	184	8	10
	£350	0	0

### Assets Available

Balance from Waitemata County Council, as per adjustment -	9	6	0
Road Board Rates to be collected as per do-say - - -	10	0	0
	£99	6	0

Additional sum required, and proposed to be raised by a Rate of 1/3 in the £ on the Annual Value of all rateable property in the Borough, viz., £4,609-10-0 (equivalent to 3 farthings in the £ on the Capital Value of £92-14-2). £288-5-1 — say collectable in time - - - - -	250	14	0
	£350	0	0

May 10, 1888.

# *The years between ...*

**1884**

**and**

**1969**



**W**HEN men and women made their way across half the world to settle in New Zealand, their first and greatest need was for land, cleared land on which to grow food. The preservation of native bush, of some of the finest and oldest trees in the world, had little place in their fight for survival.

Like thousands of acres of fine forest in other parts of New Zealand during most of last century, the land that was to become Birkenhead—largely kauri forest—was cleared in the easiest way possible—by fire.

Slowly, the land was brought under cultivation. Bush and fern gave way to orchards, strawberry patches, a vineyard or two, and paddocks for horses or cows.

At first people lived and raised families in nikau whares and bush shanties. Then, as the land was developed and the settlers established themselves, these gave way to timber cottages.

By 1890, nikau whares were almost a thing of the past. Small farms, market gardens and orchards, and cottages for homes were the accepted thing. The following extracts from Samuel Vaile's catalogue of houses and property for sale or lease, dated July, 1891, shows what had happened to the forests:

## **LAND VALUES**

**BIRKENHEAD (Cheap Property):**— Cottage of 3 rooms; commands a splendid view. 5 acres, 3

Birkenhead looking across to the Auckland Harbour Bridge

roods, 33 perches of land, all fenced, 4 acres in grass, 1 acre strawberries; shelter trees in front and on two sides. Price £400. Terms easy, as required.

**CHEAP PROPERTY:**— Small cottage with 4 acres, 2 roods of land. Price £250. Terms as agreed.

**VALUABLE PROPERTY:**— Cottage of 2 rooms; verandah. 42 acres odd of land, all level and undulating; clay on sandstone; well watered; creeks etc., all fenced. 6 acres grass, 20 acres bush (kauris included) 2 acres orchards and strawberries. Price £1800 or offer.

It was shortly before the sale quoted that the most important event in the history of Birkenhead, an event that did more to mould the future of the area than any happening before or since, took place.

In 1884, the Colonial Sugar Company decided to establish its New Zealand refining plant at Birkenhead and built what has been known ever since as the Chelsea sugar works.

It was this large-scale industrial project that was to provide jobs for those Birkenhead people who could not be accommodated on the land. And, in the course of time, Chelsea has given — and still gives — work to thousands.

In those early days, though, the establishment of the Chelsea works and the small village the works provided for its key workers gave tremendous impetus to development in the district. It led, undoubtedly, to the Birkenhead people's awareness of their parochial identity and the subsequent formation of the district into a borough with its own mayor and councillors to administer local affairs.

### GREAT PROBLEMS

By modern standards the affairs of the Birkenhead Borough Council some 80 years ago may seem trifling but in those days of isolated homesteads, cart tracks for roads, no street lights, ferries that had to be sailed or rowed across the harbour, and neither telephones nor an electric power — nor even gas — supply, the smallest problem was of great moment.

By scanning the minutes of Council meetings over the years one can obtain a clear and revealing picture of a borough and its people developing from a scattered community of farmlets and farmers or gardeners — which is how it all began — to one of the largest and most progressive dormitory suburbs of Auckland.

In those days, as excerpts from the minutes of 1890 to 1900 tell us, most of the Council's troubles concerned such matters as cattle grazing on the roads — not by the side of but on — which reached such proportions by the turn of the century that the Council referred the matter to the police.

Be it noted that "the police" was a single constable who lived in Northcote and on foot, though occasionally on horseback, roamed all of Northcote and Birkenhead as his territory.

Considerable Council debate was occasioned over what appeared to be a increase of the number of dogs seen in the borough. As a result, applications for the position of "Inspector of Dog Collars" were invited. The successful applicant was a Mr. Alex Haire whose first efforts revealed that there were 63 dogs in the borough.

The condition of roads was mentioned frequently and the Works Committee was continually taking remedial measures: that is to say, arranging for men to spread crushed shell from the beaches and sugar works ash to try to improve the carriageways.

The committee was often instructed to make "summer roads" where required. In winter, no doubt, it was beyond the committee's resources to deal with the knee deep mud.

It was not until 12 years after the borough was formed that the borough council felt it could dare

to ask its ratepayers to finance a town hall or council chamber. Until then the Council had been only one of many organisations to rent a small office for its part-time town clerk. It booked an afternoon or two each month in a church hall for Council meetings.

As it was, the first discussion on a suitable site for a town hall seems to have been in March, 1900. The subject was brought up for discussion at regular intervals — for nearly six years.

In June, 1900, a Mr. A. L. White was appointed Town Clerk in place of Mr. Thomas Seaman. The Town Clerk was paid £30 a year, and the Council office was made "open for business on the Thursday afternoon, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., nearest the full-moon."

### MOONLAMP

This is a significant detail to the history researcher. Because of the state of the roads and the isolation of the houses, the people involved needed a full moon to help them see their way home after council meetings.

Despite this isolation of the people's homes, council business was evidently increasing, for in April, 1901, the borough was permitted to increase its number of councillors to nine, and three months later began holding fortnightly meetings instead of monthly.

One small item in the minutes, later in the year, indicates clearly that these men who were dealing mainly with grazing cattle on roads, sugar works ash and the need for more substantial office and meeting place, did indeed have a human side to their natures. The mayor announced to his colleagues, with some pride, that the Royal Humane Society's medal had been awarded to a Birkenhead man, a Mr. G. Rogers, for rescuing Mr. Joshua Hadfield from drowning at Chelsea.

Reading through the minutes of this early 20th century era, one notices the economy of words in which certain facts are put. The following are examples:

"Hadfield's Hollow to Bagot's Hill — scrub to be cleared."

"Ruts in the roads to be filled with tea-tree and earth."

"Amount available for road maintenance, £62.19.9."

One resident was threatened with prosecution "if he persists in driving his dray on the foot-path."

In March, 1902, there was fear of an outbreak



## 1902 - 1910

of bubonic plague and, in this connection, the Council resolved that all care should be taken in the borough including arranging with the Chelsea Sugar Company to allow rats to be destroyed in its furnace. Threepence per head was paid for all rats delivered there.

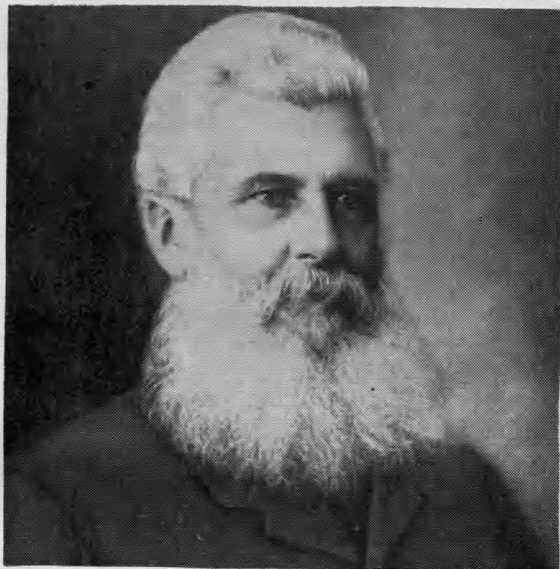
January 18, 1906, was an important date, for the Council met for the first time in new Council Chambers. Before proceeding with the ordinary business, Cr. H. M. Shepherd presented to the borough, through the Mayor, a handsome Mayoral chair, a ponderous piece of furniture — still used as such today.

Great satisfaction was expressed by the Council at being able to meet in a building to be used exclusively for borough business and a tribute was paid to Cr. Fred Souster, who had been the architect and Mr. F. A. Pitt, the builder. The Council Chambers at that time faced Hauraki Street (now Hinemoa Street) but was later shifted back to the site it occupied until its demolition in 1967.

During 1906, a number of new roads were formed in the district — Roseberry Avenue and Tizard Road to mention two.

### PEOPLE SPREAD

Also, in that year the Council was pressing the Postmaster-General for a new post office at Highbury. The move of the centre of population away



Charles Edward Button Esq., Birkenhead's first Mayor, 1888-1901.

from the Birkenhead wharf waterfront had begun.

The only post office at that time, early in 1906 that is, was at the wharf in Verran's Store. Half a century later the name was spoken of again, when Verran's Corner, four miles to the north-west, had become a new centre of Birkenhead population.

Probably the most important event in 1906 was the introduction of gas to the district, another sign of progress and development. Nine street lamps were erected at first but more were put up two years later. The positioning of the nine gives some indication of the places where people were to be found: Opposite Verran's Store at the wharf, at the top of the steep hill of "Shaw's Bend", Crescent Road, Robertson's Crescent, Telephone Road, the end of Swindail's Hollow, Hawkins' Bend, Zion Hill corner, and Cookson's Corner.

By the time the borough had come of age, it was — for those days — a virile and thriving local body area.

Towards the end of 1907 the Council had begun to concentrate on work at Highbury Corner.

In 1908 the new Birkenhead Post Office was opened and the Council asked for its telegraph exchange to be open from 7 a.m. during the summer months "for the convenience of fruit growers." Such was the increase in heavy traffic up the Hinemoa hill by 1910 that the Council requested the Auckland Harbour Board to erect a



Mr. Thomas Seaman, the first Town Clerk, for £30 a year.



View of Hinemoa Street, looking down from Highbury, about 1906 to 1910. The "new" Council Chambers is on the right. A closeup (right) of the building on its original site.

stand for "leader horses" under the cliff at Birkenhead wharf. A water trough was also placed in position by the wharf about this time.

Towards the end of 1910 Messrs Oldham Bros. and William Goodall were operating buses in the district. The service was hourly between Highbury and the wharf, the first leaving Highbury at 8.10 a.m. and the last at 10.15 p.m., except Saturday when it was 11.20 p.m. The fare, Wharf to Highbury was 3d., beyond 6d. After 7 p.m. all fares 6d.

It was in 1911 that the Takapuna Tramway Company began to negotiate with the Birkenhead Borough Council to run trams to Birkenhead, but the plan came to nothing.

An extract from the Council estimates of 1912 shows: general rates £1,480; shingle, shell, chips (for roads) £80; tar for footpaths £80; drivers' wages £132.12s.; and upkeep of horses £110.

Good news for gardeners in 1912, for they could obtain horse manure from the borough council stables, "for the taking."

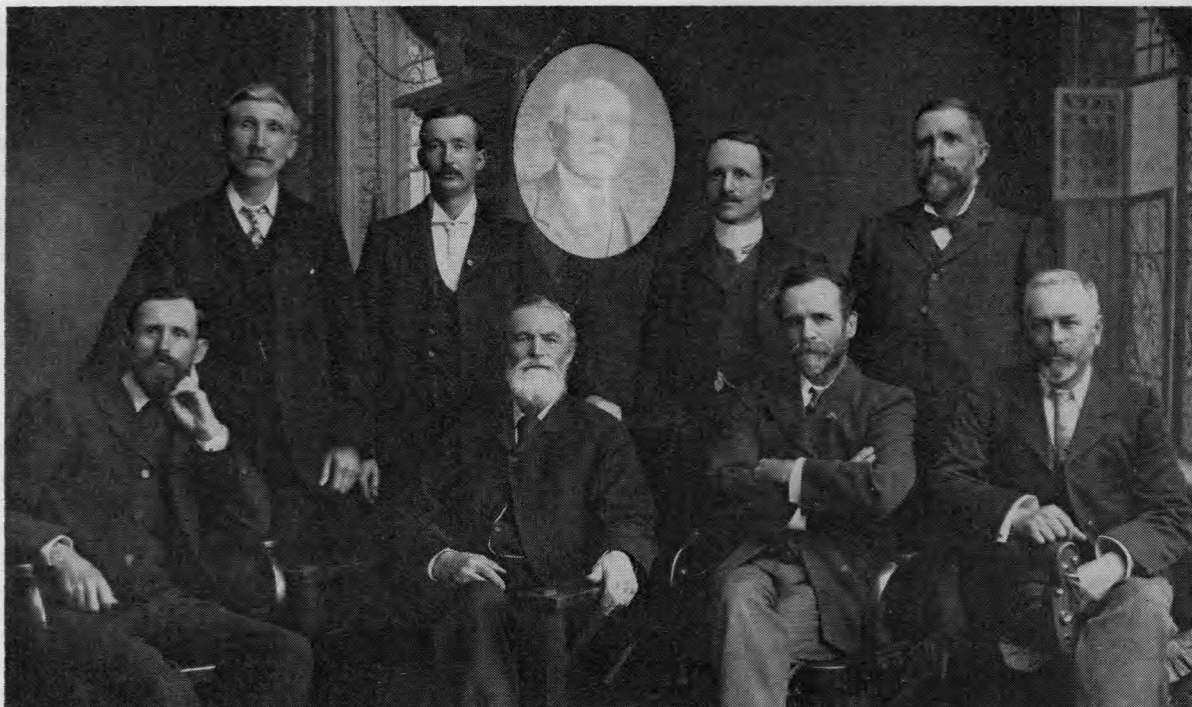


Borough council drivers must have taken a pride in their horses for, in 1913, they were granted permission to show them at the Waitemata Show on the understanding that any prizes won were "to be divided among the drivers".

In 1913, a weekly "Sanitary Service" began and the person who undertook the task was paid £1 per night, on the understanding that he supplied his own team of horses. Hours, 10 p.m. — 6 a.m.

In the same year, 1913, Constable McGilp retired and the Borough Council requested the Police Department to appoint a mounted con-





The Council of 1906: Left to right. Back row: Wm. Wallace, F. Souster, H. P. Taylor, Alex Keyes, and front row: J. G. Kay, A. F. Porter, Mayor, Tom Hadfield, and A. L. White, Town Clerk. Faintly, in the oval, is H. M. Shepherd. Two other council members were not available to be photographed. They were E. J. White and Thos. M. Shepherd.



William Wallace Esq., Mayor 1912-1915.



James Prentice McPhail Esq., Mayor 1915-1921, and 1929-1932.



stable, pointing out that because of the size of the district, it was impossible for a constable "on foot" to cope with the work. The application was declined.

### WORLD WAR I

When the Great War broke out in 1914 surprisingly little appears in the Council minutes. The one mention that comes to mind is a brief report of the Auckland Provincial Belgium Relief Fund.

In 1915 there was a Birkenhead Patriotic Club which organised a Farewell Ball at the Forester's Hall. Also in that year, it was resolved to erect a "Board of Honour of Residents now on Active Service." This was prepared by a Mr. Warner and displayed in a case on the wharf.

As time went on, one reads of the activities of the Birkenhead Ladies' Patriotic League which raised funds for equipment for the Y.M.C.A. "at the front". They also had a book-bin installed in front of the Council Chambers.

In 1916, the Birkenhead Beautifying Association was formed. One of its main objects was to carry out improvements on the waterfront. Mrs. A. M. Mickle presented an iron seat which was placed about 200 yards up from the wharf.

In 1916, the Government announced its intention to introduce opossums. The Birkenhead Borough Council sent a strong letter of protest. The Council was supported by Mr. Levesque, who knew what pests they had become in Gippsland and anticipated the pest these animals would be in New Zealand.

What Spartans the early borough councillors must have been for in 1917 Cr. E. G. Skeates raised a point that there was no heating device in the Council Chambers and he felt the situation should be rectified.

The first Anzac Day was not commemorated in the borough owing to short notice and the intervention of the Easter holidays.

In 1917, however, Anzac Day was held on April 23. The principal speaker was the Rev. H. A. Sharp. Other speakers included the Hon. George Fowlds and Mr. C. H. Poole, M.P.

Anzac Day has been commemorated in the borough ever since, and until the opening of the Memorial Park in 1958, the service was held at the Civic Reserve, outside the Borough Council Offices at Highbury. In the event of wet weather, the service was held in the Forester's Hall opposite, afterwards known as the Kiwi Picture Theatre.

In November, 1918, came the good news that an armistice had been signed between the Allies and Germany. The Mayor, Mr. J. C. McPhail,

### 1919 - 1923

when addressing the Council, said he hoped satisfactory peace terms would be arranged, so as to prevent a repetition of the suffering and horrors of the previous four and a half years.

Shortly after the signing of the armistice, the devastating influenza epidemic broke out in New Zealand. On November 20, 1918, a special meeting was called to consider what had and could be done. A tribute was paid to the voluntary workers for an emergency hospital had been established (at the school) and public inhalation chambers provided. Motor cars were placed at the service of the workers, food was supplied and assistance rendered where required.

Seven days later, at another meeting of the Borough Council, the Mayor reported that the district was practically clear of the trouble. There had been 13 deaths in the borough from the epidemic.

At the meeting it was placed on record that Mr. McPhail had done his utmost to relieve distress and "he had touched the hearts of the people by the whole-hearted manner in which he had set aside his own private work and affairs, and devoted his time to ministering to people and relieving distress."

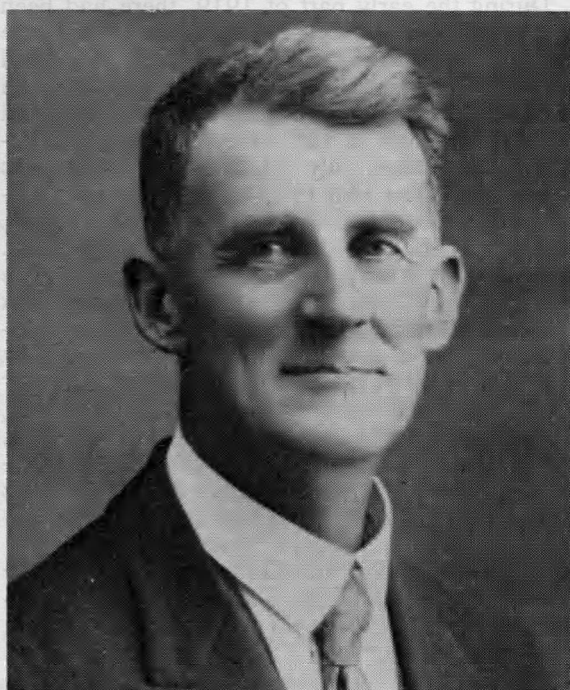
During the early part of 1919, there had been socials in the district to welcome home the returned soldiers. The Council then organised peace celebrations which took place in the borough in July. The Council Chambers, the shops and private dwellings on the main roads were decorated. On Sunday, July 20, a united service was held in the Zion Hill Hall which borough councillors, members of Friendly Societies, Scouts, Senior Cadets and returned soldiers attended. Monday was a day for the children, who were provided with entertainment. "Great credit was due to the band which considerably helped proceedings," the council minutes recorded.

It was in 1920 that the borough's first regular refuse collection was begun. On the face of it, the introduction of such a service seems trivial. In fact it was another sign of Birkenhead's development. There are, even today, many settlements in New Zealand which do not have rubbish collected at all.

In March, 1921, the Birkenhead Progressive League was formed. Mr. J. W. Court was appointed President. Mr. A. Turner and Mr. Darlow, Snr., vice-presidents. Committee: Messrs P. E. Ross, T. Smith, H. Campbell, L. Gilpin, P. Hayward, E. Taylor, R. Hayman, R. McDonald, J. Brook, E. Lanigan, F. H. Woodhouse, A. Bartlett and G. Goodall.



The Council of 1919: Left to right, back row: R. Taylor, E. V. Walton, H. Boardman, P. C. Backhouse, J. R. McPhail, E. Greenslade, Town Clerk, and front row: R. Webb, A. Hadfield, J. P. McPhail, Mayor, E. G. Skeates, and A. E. Wood.



Edward Cranston Walton Esq., Mayor  
1923-1925.



Ernest Gilbert Skeates Esq., Mayor 1925-  
1929.

Highbury Corner received considerable attention in 1921 and £750 was set aside to finance the cost of forming the four streets at the junction. Today it might cost ten times that amount.

Towards the end of that year, hawthorn was declared a noxious weed. Gorse and blackberry had been classed in that category some 20 years previously.

In 1923, Constable Beddek received the Council's congratulations on the way he collected sufficient evidence to arrest and convict a criminal at Birkdale.

The sum of £600 was spent on forming three roads in the Beach Haven Estate in 1924—the roads being Pohutukawa and Kowhai Avenues (£200) and Tui Crescent (£400).

Good news for the permanent employees of the Council who had given continuous service for 12 months, for from 1925 onwards, they were to be granted one week's leave on full pay.

From the mid-1920s, repeated requests were made to the Post and Telegraph Department to install automatic telephones.

Also about this time, there was a case of competition between Blue Star Motor Service Ltd. and the Marine Suburbs Bus Company. The latter company was granted a licence "because it had given proof of its ability to provide a satisfactory service which met with the approval of residents." Incidentally, this was the pioneer bus company at Birkenhead and had commenced operations in 1914.

Residents of Birkenhead, however, were not at all satisfied with the decision of the No. 1 Licensing Authority in not granting a licence to the Blue Star Motor Service Company. Public meetings were held and many letters of protest written to the Press over a period of months.

### WIRED FOR POWER

An innovation of considerable importance in the borough's accelerating development took place at the end of 1926. The borough was wired for electric power.

An impressive civic function to celebrate the introduction of electricity was held outside the Borough Council Chambers during the evening of December 23. Mrs. E. C. Walton, wife of Birkenhead's representative on the Waitemata Electric Power Board, switched on the current to the modified street lamps after many speakers had addressed a large crowd from the bandstand.

The Mayor, Mr. E. G. Skeates, presided and announced that the borough's 22 gas street lamps were being replaced with 100 electric lamps of 100 candle power each, about twice that of the gas lamps, but at little extra cost.

It was a great occasion and it ended in style with cheers for the electric power board, cheers for the Mayor and borough council, and the Birkenhead Municipal Band playing the National Anthem.

The introduction of electric power to the borough seemed to signify an end to the old ways and the beginning of a new era.

### THE NEW WAY

For it was about this time, 1926 - 1927, that the old methods which had served the Birkenhead settlers and their families so well began to give way to the demands of a new, post-war way of life.

In January, 1927, for instance, the widespread use of sugar works ash for surfacing roads and footpaths was mentioned for almost the last time.

The minutes record: "The track leading to Island Bay wharf is nearing completion. Tramway, Lancaster, Salisbury, Eskdale, Vermont, Victoria and Hutton roads will be 'ashed' before winter."

It was at this time, too, almost 10 years after the Great War had ended, that a memorial to Birkenhead men who had fallen, took shape at last.

The Memorial was unveiled at the Civic Reserve on April 24, 1927. The programme included speeches by the Mayor, Mr. E. G. Skeates, Mr. A. Harris, M.P., the Revs. H. H. Bedford and J. H. Allan, Mr. J. H. McNish who represented the R.S.A., and Mr. F. Finch, Town Clerk.

The Last Post was sounded by Sergeant C. Patten and the Borough Band headed a procession comprising returned servicemen, senior Cadets, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and brownies. The procession marched from the Post Office to the reserve for the memorial service.

At the close of 1927, "The Auckland Star" reported a number of burglaries at Birkdale "where many residents are at present reaping a good harvest from a prolific growth in their strawberry acres".

On another page, the Star reported:

"When the season is on and the carefully manicured citizen toys with his saucer of strawberries and cream, maybe he will give a passing thought to the slave of the spade whose hands are not manicured.

"Take, for instance, the dinkum digger of Birkdale (a place destined to become the health resort of the North Island on account of its magnificent air and its incomparable beauty), who with his own hands has dug every inch of two acres and a half.



# BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL.

1927. — 1929.



L.R.L. Moller.



W.B. Darlow.



G.B. Hewson.



H. Clark



F. Finch.  
Engineer & Town Clerk.



E.G. SKEATES  
- Mayor -



A. Hadfield.  
Dep. Mayor.



P.H. Furley



C.E. Campbell.



H.D. Boles.



A.C. Jasper.

"If he had put in half an hour leaping hurdles better than someone else, he might have got a silver cup or a free trip to the south, but the toiling speck on the hillside, watching the brown ribbon grow under his busy spade, merely looks at the weather and prays Allah to give the strawberries sun.

"He is the Man with the hoe, the Bloke with the spade, the Cove with a parcel of poison on his back and a spray nozzle in his hand. The mere sight of the bale of straw requisite for the multitudinous plants would appal the stoutest suburbanite. By the time the strawberry man reaps his cheque, he should know every plant and call it by its pet name.

"Funny thing about him is that although the elements have kicked him hard ever since he put in his first plant, he is cheerful. A man who plies a spade like the dinkum digger of Birkdale hasn't time to achieve a liver."

In September, 1927, a preliminary discussion by the Borough Council on a sewerage scheme for the borough took place. It was also during this period that the North Shore boroughs discussed plans for a destructor for the disposal of rubbish.

Birkenhead Borough Council, however, decided to disclaim liability for any expenditure incurred in the construction of a refuse destructor for North Shore boroughs. Even Legal action was discussed.

In the spring of the year, a publicity movement for the sole purpose of exploiting trans-harbour suburbs was formed. It was hoped to attract 100,000 visitors during the summer months. Galas and excursions would be arranged, it was decided.

The "Star" in November, 1927, reported that there was to be a "North Shore Week-end Programme" with half-rate excursions on the vehicular ferries on Saturday and Sunday, November 19 and 20. The "Star" added: "As the strawberries will then be in the first flush, car owners may have an opportunity to seeing how these delicious fruits really grow. One Birkdale grower has a farm with 160,000 plants. A map may be obtained on request at the ferry offices showing routes to Birkenhead, Birkdale and Beach Haven, as well as other places of interest on the North Shore."

An event of a more personal nature took place at the end of the year to brighten borough council affairs.

### MAYORAL WEDDING

It was in 1927 that the Mayor, Mr. E. G. Skeates, married an Australian lady in Sydney. On their return to the borough, a very pleasant gathering in honour of the newly weds was held at the

"Gables", the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Campbell. Afternoon tea was served on the verandah and the Birkenhead Band provided a programme of musical selections.

For some months the council had discussed the desirability of building swimming baths at Hinemoa Park and constructing boat lockers near the Birkenhead Wharf. Eventually, it was decided to hold a poll on these matters and a proposal to extend the water supply reticulation and to replace with four-inch mains the smaller existing water mains in various parts of the borough.

The "Star" of June 29, 1928, reports that of the three issues voted upon, one was carried. The successful proposal was for £5,230 for an improved water supply reticulation.

In mid-1928, the Council discussed buying the property, at Highbury Corner, of the late H. M. Shepherd as it would make an ideal site for a town hall. The proposal was defeated.

As 1928 drew to a close, pressure was still being brought to bear on the Postmaster-General for the installation of an automatic telephone system. Finally, the matter was referred to the Prime Minister, Mr. J. G. Coates.

Also about this time, the Council authorised improvements to Hinemoa Park. A bandstand, designed by the Borough Engineer, Mr. Frank Finch, which was to cost £100, and upper and lower entrances costing £23 and £30 respectively were approved. The park was officially opened by the Mayor, Mr. E. G. Skeates, on December 23, 1928.

The year closed with the time-honoured celebrations, but two were of special importance to the people of Birkenhead.

The first was when the Mayor, Mr. Skeates, entertained borough councillors and their wives at a function at which he announced he would not be seeking re-election as Mayor of Birkenhead.

He had decided, he said, to leave with Mrs. Skeates and his son Eric Skeates on the S.S. Marama on February 15 for England.

He said he would apply to the borough council for leave of absence for the balance of his mayoral term. He concluded by paying a tribute to Mr. A. Hadfield, the deputy mayor, for the loyal and helpful way he had helped him during his four years of office.

On behalf of Mrs. Skeates and himself, Mr. Skeates handed Mr. Hadfield a silver entree dish, suitably inscribed "as a memento of their association and a mark of his gratitude."

The other function, held on December 26, was

## 1929 - 1930

a gathering of Chelsea employees at the Forester's Hall, when 23 members of the staff with continuous service at Chelsea ranging from 25 years to 46 years were present.

Mr. John R. McPhail, who presided by virtue of having the longest service at Chelsea of those present, explained that Mr. W. B. Woolley, who had worked at Piermont, Sydney, had been some few months longer in the company's service. He mentioned that Mr. George Day, who was unavoidably absent, was the oldest employee.

### HARBOUR BRIDGE MOOTED

A perusal of newspapers of the mid-1920s to 1929 reveals a proposal for a Harbour Bridge.

Sir James Gunson was a strong advocate and led many preliminary talks. Eventually the Government suggested setting up a committee of engineers and an early investigation as to when and where borings should commence.

From the middle of 1929, the papers were full of proposals as to how the bridge should be built. The possibility of a tunnel to the North Shore was also considered.

One correspondent to the "Star" wrote "That Harbour Bridge—is it needed? Autoplanes will soon be here!"

After many deliberations lasting over months, "The Auckland Star" reported with big headlines:

**"PREMATURE — HARBOUR BRIDGE PROPOSAL."**

"Time for erection will not arrive in less than twenty years. Daytime ferry services adequate."

As the population of the borough grew, the services that had been accepted by the previous generation were found to be inadequate, particularly the water supply.

That is why we hear, in 1929, of "great dissatisfaction with the water supply from Lake Pupuke." There was even talk of augmenting the supply by damming the Wairau Stream.

Since the Wairau Valley has now become an industrial area and the stream receives some of the effluent from the factory buildings, it was fortunate for posterity that the scheme came to nothing.

This was the year of local body elections and we find that the Birkenhead roll totalled 2,463 people. Of these, 1,450 went to the polling booths, which is a healthy proportion bearing in mind the paucity of transport and the poor condition of the roads at that time.

For the mayoralty, there was a lower poll, but a close contest resulted between Mr. J. P. McPhail and the previous deputy mayor, Mr. A. Hadfield, the man who had been left as acting mayor by

Mr. Skeates. Mr. McPhail was successful with 514 votes to 419.

The year 1929, in retrospect, was an interesting year. It was the year before the great depression of the 1930s, and the old adage of "coming events cast their shadows before them" could well have been applied. Indeed, the shadow was evident to many people and was to curb many progressive borough council efforts.

For instance, an extract from the "Sun" newspaper of June 20, 1929, reads: "A deputation from the Birkdale Branch of the Women's Institute waited on the borough council in connection with extra street lights at Birkdale. After hearing the deputation, the Mayor, Mr. McPhail, explained that the cost of street lighting in the district had gone up from £200 to £400 and it was a case of finance."

Another extract from the same paper and the same date: "In reply to a request for a public telephone box at Verrans Corner, the district engineer of the P. & T. replied that in view of the fact that a substantial loss is to be expected from an installation at the point under review, it is not possible to accede to the request."

The "Auckland Star" dated July 18, 1929, refers to "Unemployment Relief" which was under discussion at a Birkenhead Council meeting:—

"The Works Committee reported in respect to the grant of £30 from the Poppy Day Fund, and that the proposed works had been submitted to the Public Works Department, and if the council would vote an equal amount in order to obtain the Government subsidy of £30, there would be £90 in all. The committee suggested making a footpath and water channel in Puriri Avenue, painting fences and clearing reservoir site of scrub."

### FIRE BRIGADE

At a Council meeting at the end of July a bold proposal was made to hold a Queen Carnival to raise funds for fire fighting equipment.

In December, 1929, it was decided that a Birkenhead ex-servicemen's Association should be formed. A provisional committee was set up comprising Messrs. W. C. Neech, F. Tothill, A. Fraser, A. White, J. Davies and W. S. Garrett, with T. Dale as treasurer and J. W. Canty as secretary.

Towards the end of 1929 one more sign that the importance of the borough was recognised in Central Government circles came from the Director of Dental Hygiene. He announced that Birkenhead's request for a dental nurse had been granted.

As a result, a dental clinic was opened at



Birkenhead School and Miss T. P. Mills was appointed Nurse-in-charge. Much was made then of the borough's first dental nurse, a position that is now taken for granted.

The New Year began with the usual list of problems, not the least of which was overcrowded buses. There were numerous cases of buses, licensed to carry 27 passengers, crammed with 50 or more.

Another repeated demand from people of Birkenhead was for a better cross-harbour service. In particular, as people wrote to newspapers, "the present ferry service is unable to cope with the vehicular traffic".

If it points to nothing else, this complaint suggests that by 1930, Birkenhead's roads were beginning to improve from the clay and sugar works ash era. This was at a time, incidentally, when in Germany the famed auto-bahn, the wide, straight concrete high speed motorways were being built.

Although a direct approach to the Postmaster-General for automatic telephones had been made at the end of 1929 — and had again been turned down — the numerous representations which had been made to the Post and Telegraph Department during the previous decade looked as if they were at last going to bear fruit. For, on May 29, a start was made to lay submarine cables across the harbour. Each of the new cables, it was reported, carried 150 wires "and it is expected they will provide for all the subscribers in the Northcote-Birkenhead areas for a number of years".

From the mid 1930's news items in the press mostly concern unemployment subsidies. In November of that year, the Mayor, Mr. McPhail

## 1930 - 1931

announced that permission had been given to borrow £2,700 without a poll for football field construction "for the relief of unemployed!"

About this time the Council minutes recorded that experimental re-construction work by the concrete penetration method being carried out on the Birkenhead-Albany main highway.

In December, 1930, the Council sought permission from the Auckland Harbour Board to erect a temporary shark-proof fence at Hinemoa Park to provide safe swimming facilities for school children. Permission was granted, but the council deferred the matter on account of lack of finance.

At a meeting of the Council in March, 1931, the Mayor reported that 124 men were now engaged at Birkenhead on unemployed relief works.

### NEW POST OFFICE

Also about this time the Council asked the Post and Telegraph Department to erect a new Post Office at Highbury. This took four years to become a reality.

The poor vehicular ferry service to Birkenhead was still a bone-of-contention. It is interesting to note that the last boat left Birkenhead at 4.45 p.m.

This was the year of a 10% wage reduction which, in the case of Birkenhead Borough Council employees would amount to an annual saving of £325. Also, although the hospital levy was £195 lower, the Council had new liabilities which more

A view of Beach Haven wharf and across the harbour to Hobsonville in the Sunderland flying boat days.



## 1931 - 1932

than absorbed these savings. Most of these were brought about by the need for providing relief work.

Interest charges on the £2,700 unemployment loan absorbed £307, and for the first time the borough had to pay a levy of £363 to the newly-constituted North Shore Fire Board.

Advice was received from the Minister of Health, the Hon. A. J. Stallworthy, that a request made by the Council for an ambulance to be stationed at Birkenhead, had to be declined. The Minister said he regretted having to take this step, but due to the grave financial position prevailing at the time, there was no alternative.

### BERRY TROUBLE

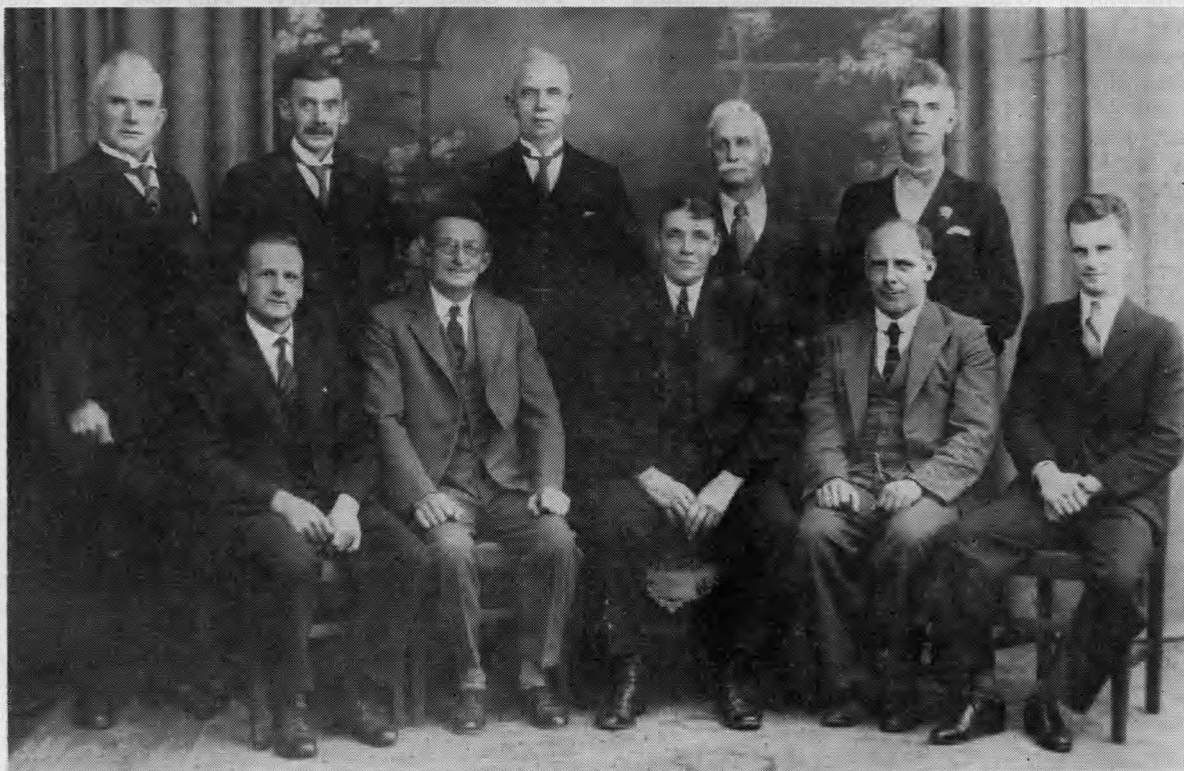
Another difficulty experienced during this grim period was a disease that attacked the strawberries. It was a root disease and was thought by one authority to be caused by excessive manuring.

A report in the "Auckland Star" of a meeting

held in the Victoria Hall, Birkenhead on November 9, 1931, tells us that the Upper Waitemata Harbour Development Association had called a meeting to discuss a scheme to link Hobsonville and Beach Haven by a bridge. A donation of £7 guineas to the association was donated by the Birkenhead Borough Council, and the Whenuapai Ratepayers' Association wrote that it was prepared to give the scheme any assistance required.

A membership subscription of 1/- was adopted and a circular was prepared to explain the benefits that would accrue from the completion of the project.

This austere year came to a close when the Council arranged a free trip to the zoo for the children of relief workers. The children were under the care of the Mayoress, Mrs. McPhail, and a committee of ladies and were served with light refreshments. The Marine Suburbs Bus Company and the Birkenhead Transport Company provided buses free of charge and the Devonport Ferry Company allowed free transport across the harbour.



Birkenhead Borough Council 1931-1933. Back row, left to right: J. Macdonald, P. Dennen, H. A. Campbell, W. H. Payne, E. J. Sinel and A. G. Jasper. Front row: R. R. Hayman, G. B. Hewson (Deputy-Mayor), G. Mills (Mayor), J. Prickett and H. Kemp (Town Clerk).

It is such actions as this, "for the children of relief workers", that renews one's faith in the essential human-ness of a borough council "of the people (appointed) by the people", despite the unfeeling austerity it must practice in bad times—and 1930-1933 was one of the worst of times.

Apparently the summer of 1932 was exceptionally dry for, according to the "Auckland Star" dated February 12, 1932, there was an increased consumption of water at Birkenhead and a "further lowering" of the surface of Lake Pupuke, the main source of water for the North Shore.

The daily papers were still referring to the unemployment problem and various suggestions were being made as to how to alleviate the sufferings of so many. One suggestion made by the Birkenhead Council was "that there should be a shorter working day".

On June 30, 1932, the town clerk, Mr. J. W. Cocks, retired, and was succeeded by Mr. H. Kemp on August 17, five days after the sudden death of the Mayor, Mr. J. P. McPhail, at the age of 58. Until the situation was resolved, by election or appointment, the deputy mayor, Mr. G. B. Hewson, acted as mayor.

At an emergency meeting of the Birkenhead Borough Council on August 16, 1932, Mr. G. Mills was appointed mayor to succeed the late Mr. McPhail. He was sworn in the following evening.

This change in the borough's administrative body, sad though it was, was followed by a decisive and realistic approach to the borough's affairs.

## NEW BROOM

Within a month of assuming the mayoralty, Mr. Mills presented a financial survey to the Council. He said the finances were in a serious position and he proposed to bring down a further report at the Council's next meeting.

At this meeting Mr. Mills reported that the bank overdraft of £5,500 had since been considerably reduced by the payment of current rates. A decision was made, however, to stand down the twelve men on the outside staff for one week in each six-weekly period, the saving for the six months being about £200.

One motor lorry was also to be withdrawn from commission. A substantial reduction was being sought in street lighting costs and the possibilities of effecting economies in several other directions came under consideration.

The saving of £200 over six months seems little enough by today's standards but it was an impressive figure in 1932. It also indicates that

the average weekly wage for a council worker in those days was a little more than \$8.

It was in November, 1932, that the oldest surviving member of the first Birkenhead Borough Council died. He was Mr. Benjamin T. Hawkins, who had been born in Birkenhead and had lived there all his life. He was the younger of two sons of Henry James Hawkins who had settled at Birkenhead some time before 1880 and had worked an orchard and commercial strawberry patch at the side of Glenfield Road at Zion Hill, what is now the corner of Onewa Road and Glenfield Road.

This undertaking had been continued on an extensive scale by his son Benjamin.

Towards the end of 1932 letters were read at a council meeting from the Birkdale Ratepayers' Association and the Birkenhead Ex-Servicemen's Association, protesting at the disconnection of street lights, the number having been reduced from 128 to 40.

At the same council meeting, it was reported that a bore had been sunk 400 feet on the site near the Birkenhead reservoir where water had been located by a diviner in 1910. The pump had tested the flow at a depth of 140 feet and had found the flow to be about 125 gallons an hour.

On March 2, 1933, "The N.Z. Herald" reported that several members of the Birkenhead Borough Council and its staff inspected the Waikahikatoa Stream near Cuthill, the source of the proposed new water supply for the borough. The estimated cost of the scheme was £17,345 without filters and £4,000 additional with filters.

A few weeks later, Mr. R. P. Worley, Consulting Engineer, explained schemes for obtaining a supply of water for North Shore boroughs, from Lignite Creek and several other sources.

None of these schemes was implemented. Eventually an agreement was reached with the Auckland City Council to supply Birkenhead with water from either its reservoirs across the harbour or from Lake Pupuke.

Thus, finally, one problem was solved, but the Council was still faced with the Depression's financial headaches.

In mid 1933, further economies were recommended by the Mayor, Mr. Mills. At a meeting on June 8 the estimates were cut 10% below the previous year's figures.

To meet current expenditure, the town clerk was instructed to strike the rate promptly and allow a rebate of 5% if paid within 30 days of demand.



## **1934 - 1939**

In addition, two motor trucks were sold and for five months, work was confined to street maintenance.

Then came an event in lighter vein as if to relieve the tension of hard times and make them bearable.

"The N.Z. Herald" of June 28 reported: "Arrangements for the observance of Arbor Day at Birkenhead were advanced by a combined meeting of the Council's Parks Committee and various school committees in the district. It was agreed to hold a function to revive the previous custom of tree-planting.

"The Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe is to be invited to plant a tree at the Birkenhead Civic Reserve adjoining the Borough Council Chambers, and to address the children of the local schools."

"The Auckland Star" reported: "A sunny day made one of the garden suburbs of Auckland smile this morning when Lord Bledisloe visited Birkenhead to plant a tree in observance of Arbor Day.

"Besides 1,200 school children from the Northcote District High School, the Northcote, Birkenhead, Birkdale, Glenfield, Albany and Greenhithe Primary schools and the Northcote Convent, some 300 residents of the borough gathered in the Council Chamber's grounds where the planting ceremony took place and His Excellency spoke to the people.

"The Mayor, Mr. Mills, said although the borough was 50 years old, it was the first time a representative of the King had visited it. He hoped it had been a pleasure for him to come to the garden suburb of Auckland. Perhaps some slight delay had been occasioned His Excellency by the fact of having to catch a ferry.

"The next time the Governor-General came, he said, he hoped it would be over a trans-harbour bridge.

"Lord Bledisloe then addressed the children, explaining the origin of Arbor Day.

"After addressing the children His Excellency planted a karaka tree in the top left-hand corner of the ground and a lily-of-the-valley tree in another corner."

It was after this function that the borough's affairs began to take on a turn for the better.

At the August council meeting, the Mayor reported that the collection of rates had been better than expected and although there were still outstanding arrears, the Council's overdraft at the bank had been reduced considerably.

With one exception, the Council confined itself for the rest of 1933 mainly to small matters which, though not of significant proportions individually, in sum they are clear evidence of the continuing growth of the borough.

The Council discussed the need for a public telephone at the wharf. It was decided to ask the Postmaster General for an extension of mail delivery to Pupuke and Kauri Glen Roads and as far as the reservoir, and for collection twice daily from a public letter box at the bottom of Seddon Road for the convenience of Chelsea residents. A further application was to be made for a new post office at Highbury.

### **WATER SUPPLY**

In the "New Zealand Herald" of October 26, it was reported that definite steps had been taken by the Birkenhead Borough Council to conclude a contract with the Auckland City Council for the supply of all water required by the borough.

Within a week, preliminary survey work had begun. The "Auckland Star" reported: "A staff was engaged today surveying the proposed site for an easement over the Colonial Sugar Company's property at Chelsea, at Balmain Road, and deciding the shortest and easiest route for a pipe line from the Birkenhead reservoir to the foreshore at Kauri Point. The pipe will be taken under the harbour from Westmere. Similar work on the City side of the harbour has been almost completed."

At the last council meeting of 1933, the Mayor, Mr. Mills, reported that the financial position had been much improved and placed upon a sound basis.

With Christmas holidays approaching, the following advertisement appeared in the "Star":

**"THIS YEAR — VISIT THE SUMMER  
BEACHES OF BIRKENHEAD  
THE BEAUTIFUL MARINE SUBURB  
ONETAUNGA — FITZPATRICK'S BAY —  
HINEMOA PARK.**

Drive over the motor road through Kauri Point Domain, experience wonderful bush scenery and harbour views. Spend your summer holidays camping midst restful surroundings — visit Birkenhead this summer. Write to the Caretaker, Fitzpatrick's Bay for a camping site."

For some months, there had been letters written to "The Herald" suggesting that the name of Birkenhead should be changed.

It so happened that a Member of the House of Commons, Sir John Sandeman Allen and Lady Allen were visiting New Zealand at the time

and read the letters. Sir John then wrote and protested vigorously.

This brought about a happy sequel for Mr. Kemp, the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Council wrote to Sir John to say that it was with considerable interest council members had read of Sir John's past and present association with Birkenhead, England, the borough's namesake. Mr. Kemp told Sir John that the proposal to change Birkenhead's name was not viewed seriously and, in fact, any attempt to change it would meet with strenuous opposition from Birkenhead (N.Z.) people.

The Town Clerk concluded by saying that should Sir John and Lady Allen care to visit Birkenhead, the Mayor, Mr. Mills, would be delighted to welcome them, and accompany them on a tour of inspection of the borough, an invitation accepted readily.



The Council Chambers about 1930. The building was moved here, on the Council Reserve, from Hauraki Street (now Hine-moa Street) about 1925.

So, on the last day of February, 1934, the Mayor and councillors met Sir John and Lady Allen at the Birkenhead wharf and together they inspected the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, after which the party visited the Birkdale and Birkenhead schools.

Thus the two Birkenheads, the English city on the Mersey and the Auckland suburb were brought appreciably closer together.

However, there was yet another sequel to this little controversy over Birkenhead's name, and the following is a copy of a letter that was sent

to the "Herald" by Mr. A. B. Hammond of Mission Bay.

"During 1878, my father the late W. F. Hammond, purchased some land on the main road, then not cleared or formed, within a mile of the present Birkenhead wharf. He built a house and we lived there. At that time the whole of Birkenhead, Chelsea and part of Northcote, was known as Woodside, presumably because the area was mostly covered by thick bush and tea-tree. The only wharf was at Stoke's Point and the surrounding district was looked after by a roads board. My father was a member of this body and took an active part in its work. I remember quite clearly one morning about 1879, he told us that at a meeting the previous evening, the board had decided to alter the name of the district to Northcote. 'I expect that some day Auckland will be a second Liverpool, for many call this part Birkenhead,' he said. From that time on we adopted this name.

"There were only two other houses within miles of us, no roads, except a few tracks. Chelsea did not exist. A settler, Mr. Matthews and his family occupied the point which was later levelled to make room for the present refinery."

In February, 1934, the council ordered a memorial seat to be built in the civic reserve to the memory of a previous Mayor, the late Mr. James McPhail. The hard blue metal blocks forming the back of the structure were cut from stone quarried at Takapuna.

#### AT LAST

In the same month of the same year, the Council was advised that the Main Highways Board had agreed to the widening of the bituminous surface for the full width of the main Birkenhead highway between Highbury Corner and the Crescent, the Crescent and Carlton Terrace, and a portion near the wharf.

The Main Highways Board notified approval of specifications for surface sealing with bitumen the shoulders of the main highway through Birkenhead between Onewa Road and the northern boundary at Glenfield.

At last, 46 years after its formation as a borough Birkenhead was to have a sealed highway.

The following report on Chelsea roads appeared in "The Auckland Star" on March 23, 1934:

"The Auckland Harbour Board will shortly grant permission to the Birkenhead Borough Council to reclaim an area of not more than five acres at the head of the bay between

## 1939 - 1946

Chelsea and Birkenhead, in order to replace the present wooden bridge with a permanent footway, connecting Rawene Road, with Rugby Road, formerly called Telephone Road.

"The present wooden bridge which is used chiefly by employees of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's works at Chelsea, has fallen into disrepair, and the council proposes to build in its place an embankment which will be wide enough for a carriageway, if at some future date the traffic warrants it."

### ROADS MAINTENANCE

Indeed, most Council business at this time was in connection with various roads needing urgent attention.

There was, too, the Centennial Exhibition on the horizon and the Council recommended that £10 be contributed towards the cost of the Dominion Court.

In 1939 a sewerage loan of £4,000 was agreed to and Mr. James Prickett brought before the Council's notice the desirability of planting suitable native trees along some of the streets. A sequel to this was that a borough nursery was established.

### BOROUGH AT WAR

A few weeks later came the fateful news that World War II had broken out.

One of the first resolutions passed by the Council was to ask the Army Department to provide a guard to protect the Borough reservoir! In reply, the department said it was of the opinion that the situation prevailing at the time did not warrant a guard at the reservoir.

The year 1939 closed with a letter from the Captain-in-charge of H.M. Naval Base, Devonport, to say that "it is most undesirable that there should be any camping in the vicinity of the Kauri Point Naval Armament Depot."

In March, 1940, the Council resolved "That each Birkenhead resident who volunteers should be presented with a suitably worded card expressing appreciation of his willingness to serve. Also a pocket testament would be presented while on final leave.

June, 1940, Mrs. W. Gilfillan, on behalf of the Birkenhead Women's sub-committee, applied for the Council's support and co-operation in its desire to erect an "Emergency Cupboard" in the Borough. This was approved.

Other matters relating to the war such as Emergency Precautions and Emergency Reserve Corps came before the Council in September, 1940. Two months later, some thought was given to forming a Home Guard.

The war was still far away from New Zealand and the life of local communities could not stand still.

At Birkenhead there was much to occupy the minds and actions of civic minded people. A Centennial Memorial, in the form of a ladies' rest room and Plunket Room was built at the Civic Reserve, Highbury, and officially opened on Saturday, May 3, 1941.

Although Smith's Bush, Takapuna, was outside the borough of Birkenhead, it is interesting to note that in 1941 when the then owners of the bush offered it for sale, or alternatively offered to dispose of the timber rights, Birkenhead Borough Council supported Takapuna in its efforts to save this splendid remnant of native bush. In 1946 the Council took a similar stand over Waipoua Forest.

Matters of general business to come before the the Council during the period of the early 1940's were Traffic Control, the Chelsea smoke nuisance, air raid shelters, and the removal of the old horse trough that had stood in Rawene Road for over twenty years.

In 1942, sections in Waipa Street were selling for £130 each. Soldiers' Rehabilitation Schemes were discussed by Council in 1943 and slit trenches were closed in that same year, by which time, evidently, the Council considered the borough safe from invasion.

The sanitary service was discontinued in July, 1943.

It was about this time that State Housing was first mooted in the district, the houses to be built on Skeates' Block, Highbury.

In 1944 there was a serious shortage of electricity which, incidentally, was to continue for several years.

Servicemen who returned from overseas on furlough were given a Civic Welcome in the form of a social and dance in the Foresters' Hall on March 14, 1944.

Patriotic activities in the borough came before the Council in February, 1945, when a tribute was paid to the hard work done by the Mayoress, Mrs. Osborne, and her lady helpers in their efforts to raise money for patriotic purposes.

In the current year they had collected £1,782.

Repeated mention was made at council meetings about this time of damage to roads by heavy army vehicles.

A Civic Service was held in the Civic Reserve to mark "V.E. Day" in May, 1945.

### SUBDIVISIONS

When the war ended there was considerable need for new houses in the district; many people





The site of the War Memorial Park with its playing fields and grandstand can be seen left centre of this aerial picture of the area between Glenfield and Mokoia roads.

## 1946 - 1955

applied for permission to erect army huts on their properties as temporary dwellings. There were also many requests for additional bus stops and bus shelters. From then on the population of the Borough grew rapidly.

By 1946, the era of the sub-divisions had arrived. Many acres of land which hitherto had been orchards or strawberry "patches" were subdivided and as soon as labour and material permitted, built upon.

Postal delivery to Aeroview Estate was first instituted in March, 1946, and a telephone box placed at Verran's Corner in November, 1947.

The "Gables" Maternity Hospital, which had been under the care of a Sister Martin, was taken over by the Auckland Hospital Board in 1948.

A fine scenic reserve was added to the borough's amenities in 1948 when the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society opened a subscription list to raise the money required to preserve a fine

remnant of bush—Le Roy's Bush.

In 1949, the Mayor, Mr. E. J. Osborne, made a long statement regarding local government on the North Shore. A brief summary of the points he made are shown below:—

1. Birkenhead had little community interest with any of the other three boroughs.
2. Birkenhead's local interests were different to those of the other boroughs, the Waitemata County or the East Coast Bays.
3. Separate existence was at present best suited to meet the requirements of Birkenhead.
4. No advantages would come to Birkenhead or to any of the other boroughs if Birkenhead were amalgamated with any of them.
5. The borough was served adequately by the Waitemata Electric Power Board, The Auckland Hospital Board, The North Shore Fire Board and The Auckland Institute and Museum.

It would appear that Mr. Osborne, who was to become probably the greatest benefactor to his borough its people will ever know, was something of an isolationist.

## **1955 - 1959**

In April, 1949, provisional approval was received from the Government regarding the scheme for the War Memorial Park, one of Mr. Osborne's pet projects. The Council had spent considerable time and effort in improving access from Wairoa Avenue to comply with the Department's request.

The Council also took up the matter of securing a subsidy on the purchase price of the property, amounting to about £2,250. The proposal also included a memorial hall, the need for which had been expressed on numerous occasions.

Also in that year, the Government was asked—as it had been many times during the previous 10 years—to give the North Shore a hospital.

### **BUSY COUNCIL**

The Birkenhead Borough Council found it had an abundance of decisions to debate and make during the 1950s from the growth of subdivisions to the increasing problem of potholes, emphasised by the rapid increase in traffic, from noise abatement in residential districts to the provision of parking areas in the commercial centres. With the borough's fast-increasing population, it was obvious that the council had to gear itself to try to cope. Thus, various separate committees were formed—building, public service, finance, library, works and parks—instead of coupling two or more under one committee.

By 1955 - 1956, central Birkenhead had shed the last vestiges of a country character and had become almost totally urbanised. Even Birkdale was fast losing its character of a semi-rural district and subdivisions were to be seen on all sides of the main roads. Today, 1969, Birkdale is the most populated portion of the borough and provides the bigger proportion of rates.

Because of the marked and rapid change from country to suburban identity, the borough councillors of the 1950s were undoubtedly faced with considerable problems, not the least of which was roading.

However, there was still time to get down to the business of Birkenhead's great War Memorial Park, and on April 19, 1958, it was formally opened by the Governor-General, The Viscount Cobham.

### **PARK HISTORY**

The following is a brief history of the Park, taken from the brochure issued for the opening ceremony.

"When, in 1947, the Government announced its decision to subsidise War Memorial projects, the Birkenhead Borough Council, in view of its almost complete lack of sports grounds or amen-

ities in the district, had already purchased 45 acres of land and a dwelling from Mr. J. W. Court, together with a further seven acres from Mr. C. J. Utting. This, together with a further 12 acres, now comprises the War Memorial Park.

"A scheme plan was drawn up, submitted to the Birkenhead Returned Services Club, the next-of-kin, and finally approved at a meeting of the general public. Early in 1952, Government approval, with a promise of a £ for £ subsidy, was received by the Borough Council.

"In April, 1952, a Citizens Committee, fully representative of all local groups and organisations, was set up to raise sufficient money to complete the scheme, then estimated to cost £41,600.

"As a result of active canvassing, a Queen Carnival and other functions, a total of £22,500, comprising cash, professional services, promises of labour and materials was raised by the end of June, 1953 — a magnificent achievement made possible by untiring committee work and generous response from both the borough and many outside business firms and people.

"The Birkenhead Returned Services Club had also been associated with the scheme throughout, raising £1,050 during the Queen Carnival alone."

In a foreword, the Mayor, Mr. C. J. Utting, said:

"The 'heart' of the Park is the Memorial Shrine, containing the names of over 600 men and women from this area who served overseas. A Book of Remembrance, a page of which will be turned each day, will be placed in the building at a later date . . .

"In closing, I express the hope that this fine Park will prove most useful and be appreciated for many generations, and that its true purpose will never be forgotten.

**"MAY THE LIVES THAT WE ARE LIVING  
REFLECT THE GLORY OF THEIR GIVING**

"With aching hands and wearied feet,  
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;  
We bear the burden and the heat  
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done,  
Not till the hours of light return,  
All we have built do we discern.

" 'Matthew Arnold.' "

### **HARBOUR BRIDGE**

From early 1959, the main local body interest of Birkenhead people was something which had been a dream since pioneers first settled in the district—the imminent opening of the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

Back in the 1880s, Mr. W. F. Hammond, a

surveyor and one of Birkenhead's leading citizens, actually drew up plans for a high-level bridge from Tizard's Point to Shelley Bridge.

Frequently, the need for a harbour bridge had been stressed at council meetings during the past 70 years.

Months of preparation had gone into the planning of new routes to be taken by the buses once the Bridge was opened — a task of some magnitude!

It is interesting to note that at a council meeting on May 13, 1959, a motion was passed "That the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority be asked to consider running a skeleton ferry service to Birkenhead so that in the future, when the Bridge becomes inadequate, the service can be economically expanded."

The Auckland Harbour Bridge was officially opened by the Governor-General, Viscount Cobham on May 29, 1959. The day was sunny, though cool and a large crowd gathered to watch a procession of all kinds of vehicles as it wended its way across the Bridge, up Onewa Road to Glenfield Road.

With plenty of bunting for decoration, it made a colourful scene. On the night of the opening, the Highbury businessmen arranged for special lighting, and the various boroughs decided to participate in a chain of bonfires across Auckland. In the case of Birkenhead, the site chosen was that on the corner of Waipa Street and Kauri Road.

The Harbour Bridge was to revolutionise life on the North Shore and the sight of the first of Birkenhead's buses to be marked "CITY" made a considerable impact on the local people. After seeing "Wharf" on the buses for so many years, this new word had a kind of magic touch to it.

### PARK BEGUN

In 1959 work began on the War Memorial Park Sound Shell and Skating Rink.

The same year the Works Committee recommended that an immediate application be lodged with the National Roads Board for a special assistance grant to upgrade a number of roads in the borough.

Many major decisions were to be taken by the Council at this time for, in the near future, it was to be faced with the problem of providing for a rapidly increasing population:

- (a) Sewerage, and drainage except for the southern, older end of the borough.
- (b) Stormwater drainage for what had hitherto been rural areas.
- (c) Upgrading and provision of footpaths in a large number of streets.

- (d) Provision and development of suitable recreation areas.

If the borough was to keep pace with progress elsewhere it was realised that it was imperative to undertake these projects as soon as possible.

Those who delve into the Birkenhead Borough Council minutes since the borough was formed in 1888 cannot help but be impressed by the dedication of members of the borough council faced, so often, with a paucity of finance and an enormous amount of work to be done.

### ROADS ALWAYS

The most important task which faced the first council in 1888 was to arrange for a better road from Birkenhead wharf to Highbury. The council wasted no time in arranging for it to be provided. And the same could be said for another important road, from Northcote Terrace (now Maritime Terrace) across Little Shoal Bay to Northcote. The road was important because in those early days people went across to Northcote for entertainment and recreation at Terry's Hall and Gladstone Road Hall, the only two such halls in the district.

The list of projects faced by Birkenhead Borough Councils since 1955 can be headed with a major road improvement programme, improved water supply and sewerage reticulation, the Glenfield Cemetery to be put on a sound economic basis, and last, but not least, a new library.

The problem of finding adequate finance was certainly still there but whereas in 1888 work of a compromise standard could be done for a few £100's, by 1958 the standard required by legislation was high and the cost was to run into £100,000's.

It seemed to observers that during the years 1956 to 1959 the people of Birkenhead began to realise the magnitude of the Council's tasks ahead and that the old order of administration — which was inclined to hesitate at undertaking large financial commitments — needed changing.

### NEW COUNCIL

In any event, a new mayor and council, with — for Birkenhead — new ideas of borough finance, took office in 1959.

The new mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe, made it quite clear that he and his council colleagues intended to speed up the development of the borough by encouraging the subdivision of the more rural areas.

Having obtained a number of new homes — and more rates — in this way, the council would provide whatever amenities were required to service those homes. In particular: main roads of a



## **1960 - 1961**

good standard, sewerage, and adequate parking at the shopping centres.

The first effect of this policy became evident on December 22, 1959, when the Council formally resolved to raise a loan of £6,000 to purchase a property at 7 Rawene Road, a few paces away from the main shopping centre of Highbury, to provide off street parking for shoppers.

Thus began an era in Birkenhead local affairs of borrow and pay back out of revenue. And this was encouraged to a large extent by the central Government's fiscal policy of that time.

The parking property was eventually purchased for £4,500 and development was financed by businessmen's contributions and a Council subsidy.

It was late in January, 1960, that the extent to which the Council was prepared to go to develop the borough on modern lines became obvious. On January 26, the Council resolved to apply to the Local Authority Loans Board for approval to borrow £380,000 to carry out street improvements in the borough. A far cry from the resolution of 1905 to spend £62.19.9 on road maintenance for the year.

As the Mayor said, it was no use encouraging new subdivisions — for which the subdividers provided good internal roads — if the main roads to those subdivisions were in need of reconstruction.

### **ROAD IMPROVEMENTS LOAN**

Because of a change in the method of granting National Roads Board subsidies, which became effective from April 1, 1960, it was important that this loan should be approved and the finance raised before March 31, 1960, to qualify for extra subsidy for interest and principal repayments.

Loans raised prior to March 31, 1960, would earn subsidy on both interest and principal repayments, whereas loans raised after April 1, 1960, would only earn subsidy on principal repayments.

The Local Authorities Loans Board finally approved a figure of £150,000, and due to an all-out effort by the Mayor, Councillors, and the Town Clerk, Mr. A. G. Strahan, the money was raised before March 31, and the borough benefitted by this extra subsidy.

Shortly before this time legislation had been enacted by the Central Government to enable local bodies to insist that anyone subdividing land should contribute a portion of the profit resulting from the subdivision to a special fund. This fund would be used to provide public reserves for the pleasure and recreation of the people.

### **RESERVE CONTRIBUTIONS**

At a meeting on February 15, 1960, the Council arrived at a formula for assessing reserve contributions on subdivisions. This was as follows:—

- (a) Price each section at normal market value and obtain total value of subdivision.
- (b) Deduct: 1. Value of Homestead or Lot 1 section; 2. Cost of roading within subdivision; 3. Cost of water reticulation within subdivision; 4. Cost of sewerage reticulation within subdivision.
- (c) Take 7½ % of the residual value. This would be the subdivision levy and would be reviewed only under circumstances acceptable to the Council
- (d) The subdivider would hereto bear the cost of footpath, kerb and channelling along dedicated road frontages.

This policy decision was an important one for the Council at this stage, and resulted in many thousands of pounds being received in Reserves contributions on subdivisions carried out in the borough from 1960 onwards.

### **METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY**

On April 26, 1960, the Mayor of Auckland, Mr. D. M. Robinson, attended a special meeting of the Council to discuss the setting up of an Auckland Metropolitan Authority.

Birkenhead supported the proposed Auckland Metropolitan Authority Establishment Bill without prejudice, reserving the right to object to any further proposals the Authority might present to Parliament and the right to withdraw from membership of the proposed Authority. It was not an unanimous decision for it was carried by 6 votes to 3.

This was the first stage in the setting up of the Auckland Regional Authority.

### **MICROWAVE DETECTOR**

On 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st July, and 1st August, 1960, a microwave speed detector was in operation in Mokoia Road, Rangatira Road, and Birkdale Road, checks were made on vehicles proceeding to and from the direction of Birkenhead and 586 vehicles were stopped for exceeding the speed limit. This was the first time a microwave detector was used in the borough.

### **SHEPHERDS PARK**

On July 25, the Council resolved that the recreation and sports ground between Tramway Road and Kowhai Avenue be named Shepherds Park.

### **DINGHY LOCKERS**

In January, 1961, the first block of 20 dinghy lockers was completed at Hinemoa Park, and

tenancy allocated to local boat owners who had moorings in the area.

### BIRKDALE SEWER

On January 12, the Council received advice from the Local Authorities Loans Board that it had approved a loan of £195,000 for the purpose of completing the sewer reticulation of the borough, including pumps and engineering expenses, covering the Beach Haven and Birkdale areas and all other areas not included in the older, southern part of the borough.

### TOWN CLERK

Mr. A. G. Strahan, who had been Town Clerk since 1947, relinquished his position on February 27, and on May 24 was replaced by Mr. P. H. Kortegast.

### BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

The book of Remembrance at the War Memorial Shrine at Birkenhead War Memorial Park was dedicated by the Assistant Bishop of Auckland at the Anzac Day parade, 1961.

### BY-ELECTION

The resignations, in March, of the Deputy Mayor, Cr. Hayman, who had moved from Birkenhead, Cr. Sheehan, and Cr. Howard Taylor, resulted in a by-election which was held on April 15, when councillors N. Currie, J. Southcombe and L. Stevens were elected. Cr. Wood was elected Deputy Mayor at the first meeting after the election.

Representatives of the Birkenhead Rotary Club attended a meeting of the Council on April 24, when they presented a mayoral chain to the Borough. This chain contained a link for each of the past Mayors, and was accepted with thanks, from the Community Service Committee of the Birkenhead Rotary Club.

### PARADE OF HOMES

A Parade of Homes, consisting of 18 houses by various North Shore builders, was opened by the Minister of Housing, the Hon. John Rae, on Saturday, April 22. The houses remained open for inspection for the following week. The display was held in Levesque Street and Chippendale Crescent, and attracted many visitors. It was the first major attraction in Birkenhead since the opening of the Harbour Bridge and attracted many would-be home owners to our borough.

### SUB-STATION

The Mayor and Councillors attended the switch-on of a new electric power sub-station, at Esk-

## 1961 - 1962

dale Rd., Birkdale, at 7 p.m. on the evening of Wednesday, July 19, for the evidence of the growth of the borough.

### NORTH SHORE CITY

On July 8, 1961, a poll was taken in the Devonport, Takapuna, Northcote, Glenfield and Birkenhead areas on a proposal to constitute a City of North Shore in accordance with the Reorganisation Scheme finally approved by the Local Government Commission on January 16, 1961, as amended by the Local Government Appeal Authority on April 18, 1961. This Final Scheme as amended provided:

- (1) That the proposed City should consist of the present boroughs of Birkenhead, Devonport, Northcote and Takapuna and also that area of the Birkenhead Riding of the Waitemata County containing 4,655 acres and known as Glenfield.
- (2) That such City should be divided into six wards and should have a mayor and 18 councillors, the representation to be:

Birkenhead Ward (existing Birkenhead Borough area)	3 Councillors
Devonport Ward (existing Devonport Borough area)	4 "
Northcote Ward (existing Northcote Borough area)	2 "
Takapuna A Ward (existing area of Ward A Takapuna Borough)	6 "
Takapuna B Ward (existing area of Ward B Takapuna Borough)	1 Councillor
Glenfield Ward (that part of Waitemata County containing 4,655 acres above described)	2 Councillors

- (3) That the Mayor of the proposed City should be elected by the electors of the whole City.

Unlike Northcote and Devonport borough councils, the Birkenhead Borough Council remained neutral in this controversial issue and left it to the ratepayers to decide for themselves.

The result of the Birkenhead voting was:— For the proposal 669; against the proposal 878; informal 39. As less than 60 per cent of the valid votes recorded in the poll were against the proposal, it was "carried" in Birkenhead. This unusual way of establishing the wish of the people was one of the provisions of the Commission's terms of reference.



Rock crushing down at the Birkenhead wharf about 1926. Verran's store can be seen in the background.

This (below) was road making and sealing about 1926. Steam roller, solid tyred truck, and horse drawn tar tank.





### Results in all areas were:

Devonport	for	462	Against	3609
Takapuna	"	3,285	"	617
Northcote	"	489	"	1,132
Glenfield	"	538	"	450
Birkenhead	"	620	"	850
TOTALS		5,349		6,658

### STREETS LOAN

In October, 1961, the Local Authorities Loans Board approved the Council's application for a Streets Completion Loan of £280,000 to improve streets and footpaths in the borough, including kerbing and channelling, concrete paving and stormwater disposal.

The Loans Board agreed that the Council's expenditure should be limited to £60,000 a year with the full loan of £280,000 being spread over four years.

### LAND, CAROLS & SIGNS

A special feature was included in the Auckland Star on November 7, advertising sections for sale in the borough. Most subdividers in the area combined in this joint advertisement.

On Christmas Eve, 1961, the first "Carols by Candlelight" service was held in the reserve at Highbury.

At the Works Committee Meeting on February 20, 1962, the Town Clerk advised Council of a request from residents of Kauri Road for the erection of a street name sign on the corner of Kauri Road and Waipa Street. It was resolved that this item be deferred until the Estimates. (The Borough Engineer reported that the cost of the sign was 24s.)

At the Council Meeting on April 11, the Council made a presentation to Mr. P. J. Hunter, who for years had been the Traffic Officer in the area. Council presented Mr. Hunter with a camera as a token of its appreciation of his efforts in the district.

### ROYAL SOCIETY AWARD

At the Anzac Day service in 1962, His Worship the Mayor, presented a Royal Humane Society silver medal to Mr. W. Wright of Vermont Road, Birkenhead, the citation reading as follows —

"A Land Rover driven by Mr. M. A. Wilson collided with a truck at Takapuna on June 6, 1959, and it lay on its side in the road with Mr. Wilson jammed in his seat unconscious. When bystanders righted the vehicle it burst into flames which were fed from leaking petrol.

"Mr. Wright, aged 48, immediately threw off his coat and climbed into the back of the Land Rover, now enveloped in flames. He released Mr. Wilson

## 1962 - 1965

and dragged him out, receiving burns to his hands from Mr. Wilson's clothing, and burns to his face. Wilson died through injuries and burns."

Mr. Wilson's mother was present at the presentation.

### FLOODLIGHTS

The floodlights at No. 1 ground, War Memorial Park, installed by W. Somerville, for £830, were officially switched on at a ceremony on Thursday, May 17, 1962, by the Mayor.

Two months later, Mr. E. J. Osborne, a former and long-time Mayor of the Borough of Birkenhead (1936 to 1953) donated £6,000 to the Birkenhead Citizens' War Memorial Committee, towards the provision of a War Memorial Hall which would complete the Birkenhead War Memorial project.

### 1962 ELECTIONS

No election was necessary in 1962 for Mayor and Council, and the following council was elected:—

Mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe; Deputy Mayor, Mr. O. G. Wood; Councillors Messrs. G. Alder, C. H. W. Ashton, L. J. Lanigan, K. S. Nathan, C. E. Sherlaw, B. L. Stanley, L. F. H. Stevens, J. J. Southcombe.

Mr. T. R. Mann's nomination had been received, but this was withdrawn and saved the cost of an election.

### SWITCHING ON

The switching on ceremony for the No. 15 Pump Station, marking the first stage of the provision of sewerage reticulation in the Beach Haven Birkdale areas was held on Saturday, February 16, 1963. The Mayor, councillors, council staff and members of the North Shore Drainage Board attended the official switching on ceremony, carried out by Mr. C. F. Woodall, the Chairman of the North Shore Drainage Board.

### ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, February 9, 1963, a Garden Party to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Borough was held at Hinemoa Park.

Invitations were sent out to all leading personalities on the North Shore and Auckland City, and to all elderly residents of the borough. About 500 people attended. The programme included a madrigal group, and items by the Auckland Regiment Band.

Old pictures of Birkenhead and former Mayors, and Councillors were hung around the park on trees, and these created great interest. Many old

acquaintances were renewed and reminiscences discussed.

From Saturday, February 23, to Saturday, March 2, a Carnival was held at Birkenhead War Memorial Park. This was sponsored by the Council, and Mr. and Mrs. E. Hegan were appointed official organisers.

The Carnival was opened by Wilson Whineray, OBE, the All Blacks captain, and the programme which extended over the week included a Miss North Shore contest, house painting contest, talent quest, recording artists' concert, fireworks display, platter party, floral courts, gift wrapping demonstrations, floral art demonstrations, fashion parade, hot rod contest, pet parade, fancy dress parade, baby shows, a Mr. Olympic Junior contest and a Miss North Shore Junior contest.

Many industrial exhibits were on show and when it ended the project showed a profit of £800 which was contributed to Birkenhead War Memorial Hall Building fund.

Later, on Sunday, November 17, a combined church service, as part of the 75th Anniversary of the borough, was celebrated at the Birkenhead War Memorial Park. The official address was given by Rt. Rev. E. A. Gowing, Bishop of Auckland, and items were rendered by the Birkenhead and Northcote Combined Youth Choir. The congregation was seated in the grandstand, and the service itself took place on a stage erected in front of the grandstand. This service was well attended and proved a success.

### **SECOND CROSSING**

In June, 1963, Mr. S. Dean and Mr. L. Bogue of Beach Haven waited on Council with a petition signed by local businessmen in support of a road or bridge connection between Hobsonville and Beach Haven.

At 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 1963, the Works Committee of Council made a tour of inspection of the borough and brought forward recommendations for approximately 100 new street lights throughout the borough, 37 years after the first 100 electric lights had been turned on with much ceremony!

In July, 1963, Mrs. M. Denvers reported that a society had been formed at Verrans Corner to plant shrubs and beautify the area around Osborne Park.

### **REGIONAL AUTHORITY**

In August, 1963, the Council supported a move by the North Shore Local Bodies Association for an amendment to the proposed Auckland Regional Authority Bill that North Shore local bodies would be excluded from the Auckland authority provided they established a regional authority of

their own. In the event, all North Shore local bodies were to be represented on the Auckland Regional body.

### **PENSIONERS' FLATS**

The official opening of 20 single and 4 double pensioner flats, being the first built in the borough, was held at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, October 12, 1963.

The flats were designed by Mr. H. M. Shattky, a Birkenhead architect, and built by Topline Building Co., Ltd. The total project cost approximately £42,000. This was financed by Health Department subsidy of £19,400, and State Advances Loan of £23,000.

The flats were officially opened by the Mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe, and a commemorative plaque was unveiled at the gate. This plaque contained the names of borough councillors and borough officers.

The original tenants at Lancaster Court were: Mr. T. Rogers, Mrs. A. E. Midlane, Mrs. D. G. Page, Mrs. B. R. Nerheny, Mrs. F. C. Goss, Mrs. F. A. Jessup, Mrs. M. K. Cruikshank, Mrs. E. E. Dougan, Mrs. L. G. Rawes, Mrs. T. McCrory, Mrs. E. J. Wright, Mrs. M. McDonald, Mrs. M. E. Geater, Mrs. E. M. Carter, Miss A. Miller, Mrs. M. J. Hingston, Mr. F. R. Pinney, Mrs. M. Barnfather, Mrs. I. A. Frankland, Mrs. E. Seed, Mr. & Mrs. Kortegast, Mr. & Mrs. Coley, Mr. & Mrs. West, and Mr. & Mrs. Fox.

### **SCOTS GUARDS BAND**

On Friday evening, January 17, 1964, Her Majesty's Scots Guards gave a display of marching and military music at the Birkenhead War Memorial Park. A very large crowd from all over the North Shore attended.

### **HALF MILLION**

The Birkenhead Borough Council decided not to participate in a scheme for a series of hilltop bonfires throughout Auckland on the night of Monday, June 1, as part of the "Half Million" population celebrations for metropolitan Auckland, but did agree to enter a candidate in the "Miss Auckland Region" contest and arranged for a local competition. This was won by Miss Gail Merz from Beach Haven. Miss Merz received a prize of £25 and represented Birkenhead in the Auckland finals. The judges for the Birkenhead competition were the Mayor, Cr. Nathan, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Hegan, Mr. B. H. Ames, and Mr. B. Spiro.

The New Zealand Sugar Co. sponsored a float which was entered in the local bodies section of the parade for the "Half Million" celebrations, and the Birkenhead candidate for "Miss Auckland Region"

and her princesses travelled on the float. Miss Merz was not successful in winning, but she and her princesses were worthy representatives of the borough. Miss Deidre Gribble was adjudged the winner of the "Miss Auckland Region" contest.

### **LICENSING HEARING**

On July 17, 1964, the Licensing Control Commission heard Birkenhead's application for an hotel licence. (A full report is covered in a later chapter on the Birkenhead Licensing Trust activities.)

At an Emergency Meeting of Council on June 23, 1964, the Council resolved to support a move for Trust Control in the event of a licence being granted in Birkenhead.

### **NATURALISATION CEREMONY**

The first naturalisation ceremony to be held in Birkenhead was conducted at the Council Chambers on Friday, November 6, when the Mayor presented 13 new New Zealanders with their certificates after a "taking the oath" ceremony.

### **GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

On Saturday, February 20, 1965, the Governor-General, Sir Bernard Fergusson, landed at the wharf at Hinemoa Park at 9.30 a.m. After a short, informal inspection and discussion with Sea Scout members and leaders, he returned to his launch to start the first race of the Auckland Sea Scouts Regatta.

### **KAURI PARK GATES**

The official opening of Kauri Park gates was carried out by the Mayor at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 6, 1965, and Mr. H. Ross McKenzie performed the dedication of the James Prickett Memorial Seat. Mr. McKenzie is a prominent Auckland ornithologist and was a close friend of Mr. Prickett.

### **BOROUGH HISTORIANS**

At the Public Relations Committee meeting on January 27, 1965, the Town Clerk brought forward a newspaper cutting which had appeared in the local newspaper, asking for the names of anybody interested in compiling the borough history. At the February meeting of the same Committee, Mrs. W. Fisher and Mr. W. J. Hilder were appointed as joint Editors to record the history of the borough of Birkenhead.

### **LITTLE SHOAL BAY**

In February, the Council agreed to set up a joint committee consisting of representatives of the Northcote and Birkenhead Borough Councils to discuss the overall development of the jointly

## **1965 - 1966**

owned Little Shoal Bay Reserve. The Auckland Harbour Board was also invited to appoint a representative to the committee.

### **MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

At the Works Committee meeting on February 24, 1965, the borough inspector, Mr. D. M. Lawson, reported on a survey he had made on the Municipal Building. He said he understood the original building was erected in 1906, at the cost of £600 in Hauraki Street. It was later shifted to its site on the Municipal Reserve (some time in the early 1920s) and had been added to and altered in an endeavour to prolong its usefulness as a public building.

Mr. Lawson considered that the time had now arrived when further additions and alterations or repairs would be uneconomical, and that the building had become unsuitable for borough offices and should be replaced as soon as possible.

### **WAR MEMORIAL HALL**

At a Special Meeting of Council on March 17, its members agreed to a suggestion from the Birkenhead Citizens War Memorial Committee to the setting up of a joint committee to proceed with the construction of a War Memorial Hall. The committee was to consist of eight members, four from the Council and four from the Citizens War Memorial Committee.

### **ADDITIONS**

In March, 1965, the Council purchased property in Rawene Road from Mr. Tom Halliday as an addition to the existing Council Chambers property for future building purposes. The borough engineer's department moved in two months later.

### **CIVIL DEFENCE**

The same month, the Council's first Civil Defence Officer, Mr. R. J. Bennett, was appointed Post Warden of the Borough of Birkenhead.

### **BUS SHELTER**

In April, Birkenhead Lions Club members built and donated to the Council a brick bus shelter outside the telephone exchange building in Mokoia Road.

### **BIRKENHEAD WHARF**

In June that year, the Harbour Board advised the Council that it had built a pile barrier on the north-western side of the Birkenhead wharf as a safety measure in view of recent fatal accidents involving cars running over the wharf.



## **1966 - 1967**

### **WATER SUPPLY**

At about this time it was decided to apply for a loan of £50,000 (which the Local Bodies Loans Board authorised in August) to improve and extend the borough water reticulation and the provision of an additional high-level reservoir.

This was to improve the water supply, particularly in the Verrans Corner area, and consulting engineers were engaged to design a water tower.

Several striking and unusual designs were considered. The Council finally decided on a "mushroom" shape water tower, but after learning of its cost, it decided not to proceed with this scheme. The Council ultimately installed ring mains and pressure pumps to service the high-level areas.

### **ELECTIONS**

The 1965 elections resulted in Mr. A. C. Crocombe being again returned as Mayor, after an election with Mr. J. J. Southcombe. Newly elected borough councillors were Mrs. N. J. Bourke and Messrs. T. H. Davidson, G. Vanderstaak and D. H. Holloway. Mr. K. Nathan did not stand for re-election. Messrs. L. F. H. Stevens and C. E. Sherlaw, members of the previous council, were defeated.

### **OFF-STREET PARKING**

In April, 1966, the new Council confirmed a previous council decision to apply to the Local Authorities Loans Board for sanction to borrow £60,000 for the purchase and development of land in Mokoia Road and Glenfield Road for off-street parking. The annual charges in respect of this loan were to be met by a Special Rating Area comprising the commercial and industrial areas at Highbury.

This was the result of discussions between Council and the Birkenhead Businessmen's Association which eventually agreed to the scheme.

In May, the Council purchased a property in Hendon Avenue to gain access to Bartlett's Bay to give public access to the beach there.

In July, the directors of Chelsea Estate Ltd., the new owners of a large residential area of Chelsea, met the Council and discussed the possibility of making a site in Mokoia Road available for the Trust Hotel.

The visitors brought news of great importance to Birkenhead. Their company had bought this large block of land and proposed to subdivide it into about 1,000 building sections.

### **CONDOLENCES**

At the council meeting in August, 1966, a vote

of condolence was passed as a mark of respect for the late Mrs. O. Utting who had died shortly before. She was the wife of Mr. C. J. Utting who served as Mayor of the borough from 1953 to 1959.

A month later a similar mark of respect was paid to the memory of the late Mr. A. G. Strahan, who had died and who had been Town Clerk of Birkenhead from 1947 to 1961. Particular reference was made to Mr. Strahan's efforts in the establishment of the Birkenhead Public Library.

At the November council meeting, the Council paid its respects to the memory of the late Mr. John Court, Mayor of the borough from 1921 to 1922 and a former city councillor of Auckland. Reference was made to Mr. Court's generous donations to charitable causes, in particular his donation of 45 acres of land which now constitutes part of the Birkenhead War Memorial Park.

### **PENSIONER FLATS**

On October 1, 1966, a further 22 single flats were opened at Lancaster Court by the Mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe, and a plaque was unveiled at the entrance to commemorate the occasion.

### **ROADS COMPLETED**

On Thursday, November 10, 1966, the Minister of Works, Mr. P. B. Allen, officially opened the bus circuit route at Rangitira Road. This marked the completion of the Council's main road reconstruction programme.

Approximately 120 guests attended the ceremony, and the official party enjoyed a buffet luncheon at the Beach Haven Hall at the completion of the programme.

Mr. Allen cut a ribbon officially opening the road, and the scissors used at the ceremony were presented to the Mayoress, Mrs. A. C. Crocombe.

### **STREET NAMES**

At its December 14 meeting, the Council formally confirmed the alteration of the names of 49 streets in the borough which were duplicated in other areas of Auckland.

Birkenhead Borough Council was the first local body in Auckland to tackle this problem, which had been causing great concern to postal authorities. The changes, which became effective from February 1, 1967, were generally accepted by most residents of the borough. Objections were only made in about five or six cases, but once the new signs were put up and the advantages fully realised, most residents agreed the change was in their own interests.

### **NEW LIBRARY**

In the same month, the Council was able to

see a report and plans prepared by Richard G. Hillary & Co., Architects, showing a proposed new library and council offices on the Municipal Reserve fronting Hinemoa Street. It was agreed that the new library should be constructed and financed from the Subdivision Reserves Account.

The foundation stone had been laid by the Mayor on November 3, 1967.

A generous donation of a Reference Section by the Birkenhead Rotary Club cost about \$2,500 and was financed by various fund-raising activities of the Community Service committee of the club, including the demolition and sale of the old Council Chambers, and donations from local business firms and residents.

The President of the Rotary Club, Mr. R. W. Russell, and the chairman of the club's Community Service committee, Mr. P. W. Taylor, were officially thanked by the Mayor and the Governor-General at the official opening.

The library staff were: Librarian, Miss E. Fisher; and assistants, Miss A. Clegg and Miss A. Tooley.

Advice on the construction of the library was given by Mr. Duthie, the Auckland City Librarian and a co-opted member of the Library Committee, and members of the Country Library Service.

A contract was let to N. H. Harkin, and the library completed in April, 1968, when it was officially opened by the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt, on April 20.

### AWARD

At the council meeting on June 14, 1967, Mr. Bernard Norman Lucas of Birkdale Road received a Certificate of Commendation from the Royal Humane Society of New Zealand for the courage displayed in the rescue of a Swedish seaman from the Waitemata Harbour in October, 1966.

### HELICOPTERS

The Council had been approached in May by a firm about a site for a helicopter landing pad in the borough. The firm was invited to attend a later meeting of the Council, but nothing eventuated from the original enquiry.

About this time, the Council had been receiving many complaints from Beach Haven people regarding the nuisance created by helicopters, especially when carrying out night training. This matter was to be the subject of many further approaches to the Air Force at Whenuapai and Hobsonville.

### LICENSING TRUST

The first election for members of the Birkenhead Licensing Trust was conducted on May 20, 1967. Members elected from 21 candidates were: Messrs.

A. M. Nola, N. T. Potter, R. N. Currie, T. H. Davidson, J. D. Chicken, J. Bracken. (See elsewhere for a history of Birkenhead Licensing Trust.)

### URBAN FARM LIST

In May, 1967, the Council's Finance Committee considered an Urban Farm List and this contained the names of the following properties—

Shepherd: Ralph Vercoe	— 6 acres, 3 r., 36 p.
Unsted: Frank Nicholas	
Hewitt: William John	— 12 acres, 1 r., 5 p.
Mumme: Carl Henry Albert	— 15 acres, 2 r., 19 p.
Morrison: Mervyn Keith	— 14 acres, 0 r., 38.7 p.
Fisher: William Ernest	— 17 acres, 0 r., 18 p.
Brljevich: Ante Marko	— 3 acres, 3 r., 16.6 p.

This would probably be the last time such a concession was given to farmers in Birkenhead.

### LIBRARY CLOCK

The Beach Haven and Birkdale Residents and Ratepayers Association's President, Mr. J. Bracken, had presented an electric clock to the Birkenhead Public Library on May 20.

### BIRKENHEAD ELECTORATE

In July, the N.Z. Gazette designated many boundary adjustments which led to a new electorate on the North Shore, to be named Birkenhead. This consisted of the boroughs of Birkenhead, Northcote and part of Glenfield County Town.

The Waitemata County Council asked the Government to change the name to Glenfield, but this was refused.

### COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The August meeting of the Council was the last of its meetings to be held in the building originally constructed in 1906 and now to be demolished to make way for the new library. It was decided that meetings would be held on the mezzanine floor of the Birkenhead War Memorial Park Grandstand until the new Library building was completed.

As an interim measure, it was decided that the town clerk and administration staff should move to 2 Rawene Road, and the borough engineer's department should move to the ground floor at the grandstand.

### SWIMMING BATHS

It was at the meeting of July 10, that Mr. L. Walker and Mr. D. Glossop, Architects, of Lewis, Walker, Glossop and Company, announced Mr. E. J. Osborne's donation of a memorial swimming pool in memory of the Osborne family.

An estimate of costs had been prepared and totalled \$50,000 — Mr. Osborne had offered a

**PENSIONER FLATS**

In March, 1968, a \$61,245 contract was let to N. H. Harkin Ltd. for the construction of 17 single and two double flats on council property in Birkdale Road.

**BOUNDARIES**

An area of 45 acres in the Calliope Road-Onewa Road locality was transferred from Waitemata County Council to Birkenhead Borough Council in April. The Council proceeded immediately to create a Special Rating Area to raise a loan of \$22,410 to provide sewer reticulation in this area. Meanwhile the Council arranged for night soil collection.

**NEW MOVE**

The Town Clerk's Department moved to offices in the basement of the new library building on Monday, June 10, 1968, and the first Committee meeting in the new Council Chambers in the basement of the building was the July meeting of the parks committee.

**TOWN PLANNING**

Birkenhead's first Approved District Scheme became operative February 1 - August 30, 1968.

maximum of \$30,000 towards the cost, with the possibility of obtaining a 1 for 2 Golden Kiwi subsidy of \$15,000 to finance the balance.

Conditions of the gift were that the Birkenhead Rotary Club should control and implement the scheme which was to be sited on an area at the War Memorial Park between the bowling greens and the skating rink, and it should be proceeded with forthwith.

The Mayor made particular reference to Mr. Osborne's generosity on this and many previous occasions, his many contributions towards the development of amenities at the Birkenhead War Memorial Park, and his active interest in the youth of Birkenhead and surrounding districts.

**GOLF COURSE**

At the February meeting of Council a suggestion to develop the Birkenhead Domain as a public golf course was brought forward. At a later meeting, the Commissioner of Crown Lands and representatives from the Waitemata County Council were invited to discuss the proposal. As a result, a consultant was engaged to bring down a report on development costs.

***Mayors of Birkenhead . . . 1888 - 1968***

BUTTON: Charles Edward	- - - - -	1888-1901
WITHERFORD: Joseph Howard	- - - - -	1901-1905
PORTER: S. F.	- - - - -	1905-1906
KEYES: Alexander	- - - - -	1906-1911
KAY: John Green	- - - - -	1911-1912
WALLACE: William	- - - - -	1912-1915
McPHAIL: James Prentice	- - - - -	1915-1921
COURT: John William	- - - - -	1921-1922
HADFIELD: Albert	- - - - -	1922-1923
WALTON: Edward Cranston	- - - - -	1923-1925
SKEATES: Ernest Gilbert	- - - - -	1925-1929
McPHAIL: James Prentice	- - - - -	1929-1932
MILLS: George	- - - - -	1932-1936
OSBORNE: Ernest John	- - - - -	1936-1953
UTTING: Clifford John	- - - - -	1953-1959
CROCOMBE: Alfred Cyril	- - - - -	1959-1968
STANLEY: Bertie Lee	- - - - -	1968-





In the right foreground is the "T" junction of Onewa and Glenfield roads with the Zion Methodist Church in its well known landmark position. The picture, taken in 1946, must have been taken from an aircraft flying above Highbury and facing north west with Birkdale, Beach Haven in the background.

## Birkdale and Beach Haven

**O**RIGINALLY most of Birkdale from Balmain Road round the coast to Hellyers Creek was originally known as Parkview, later on it was which eventually cut it up into blocks of 5 acres or more. This land proved suitable for fruit farming and strawberry growing.

The highest point on the North Shore (364 feet) was originally known as Parkview, later on it was known as Bagot's hill (the same Bagot lived on and owned the site where the reservoir now is), and for many years now has been known as Verran's

Corner because it was the headquarters for Verran's — the well-known carriers in the district.

They settled in a house which was brought over by scow from Coromandel in 1908 and is still on the corner of Vermont and Victoria Roads.

In addition the stables were built there and these were superseded by the motor lorries and later taken over by bus companies (Blue Star first, then Birkenhead Transport).

In the early 1920's Mr. John Bright, a land-owner in the district, built the present shop and living quarters (now occupied by Mr. G. Allan) and several years later, other shops and a hall were built. The hall, which was known as Brighton Hall, is now a hardware shop. When the General Store (now Allan and Son) was first opened it was managed by Mr. H. Dowsing.

There were many paddocks, known as Metcalfe's, between what is now Verran's Corner and the next little "settlement" at Birkdale School.

For years this was the social centre of Birkdale and in 1906 there was a Birkdale Music Society which used to meet at the new Birkdale School and which, a year later, formed an orchestra.

Also in the area there was a Methodist Church, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1907. Behind it there was a hall which was used for meetings — until a public hall was built later at the corner of Puriri and Lancaster Roads.

The church and hall were both pulled down in 1944 and some of the timber used for the parsonage.

### EARLY FAMILIES

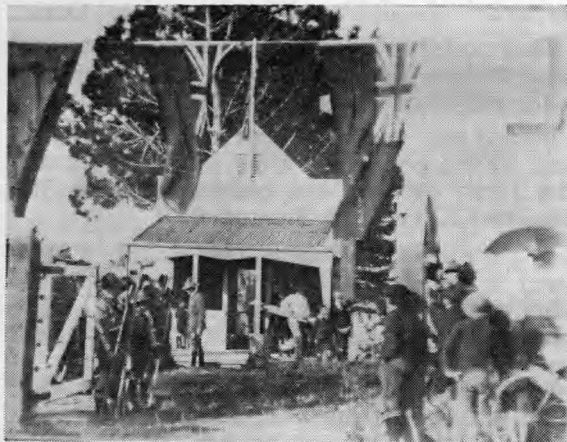
On the corner of Salisbury and Birkdale Roads there was a small general store and the Newton family owned the land opposite a little higher up and this is why it was known as Newton's hill.

The Birkdale Road area is where the le Vesque family settled and its influence was felt throughout the district. In the same area was Beere's Vineyard, a site now occupied by Birkdale Intermediate School.

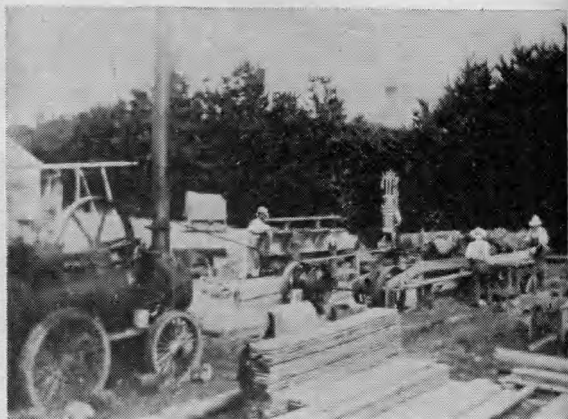
Most of the early settlers at Birkdale took land along the waterfront, the Hadfields, Shepherds, Gummars and Kays (1883). Each of these settlers had the advantage of their own private jetty which simplified transport problems.

A public wharf was provided in 1887 when the Auckland Harbour Board built the Birkdale wharf. This enable boats trading between Auckland and Riverhead to call.

On the corner of Puriri and Lancaster Roads stood the first public hall built in the borough. Building commenced in 1924 and most of it by voluntary labour. The section was given by Mr.



Originally a Hellaby's butcher shop this Scout's Den was moved to Verran's Corner near the reservoir about 1919.



Levesque's Timber Mill, Birkdale, 1922.

Hopkins senior (Geoff. Hopkins' father). The timber was brought up by scow and landed on Hellyers Creek beach. Unfortunately the hall was burnt down about 20 years ago.

Discussions took place about rebuilding a hall but this was never done and later all the assets, including the section, and valued at £1,400 were handed over to the Beach Haven-Birkdale Ratepayer's Association to help build its present hall in Kiwi Road.

From the 1890's Birkdale had been a popular summer resort and among those who used to holiday there were such well-known local families as the Bartleys, Rowntrees and Blomfields. Later, in the Rangatira Road area, the Fowlers and Peaces built their summer quarters which included their own private beaches and which still bear their names.

Where Tui Park now stands has always been a popular camping ground.

In the early twenties there was an increasing interest in seaside sections and in 1923 a Company was formed named "The Birkdale Land Company". It bought up and surveyed all the land from Hilders' Corner (corner Puriri and Kiwi Roads) on either side of Puriri Road to the wharf.

It was called the "Beach Haven Estate, the Gem of the Waitemata". Sections were priced at from £45 to £125.

Practically every section at Beach Haven was sold within six months — some two or three times. Many were bought by permanent residents of Birkdale.

The depression of the early 1930's slowed down the expected progress of the district. Many relief workers took up residence in Beach Haven living permanently in what had been built as seaside cottages.



After the Second World War ended houses were at a premium, and it was at this time that what was later to be known as "a group builder", W. G. Archer, concentrated his attention on Birkdale. Much of the flat land in Beach Haven was transformed into a modern residential suburb. By 1968 there was a thriving shopping centre where only twenty years before there had been strawberry patches, fruit farms and cattle.

Until the upsurge of population after the Second World War, Hilder's was the only store near where the Shopping Centre now is. Mr. W. J. Hilder, his wife and family started a general store combining public telephone facilities in 1924.

Not long after the Hilders settled here, a Mr. Blanchard built a shop and cabaret near the wharf. The cabaret functioned well for many years.

### ISLAND BAY

Known before 1913 as the "Port at the bottom of Victoria Road West", Island Bay is a pretty, self-contained place at the foot of Beach Road, opposite Te Atatu and Henderson Creek.

Mr. Jarrett of Herne Bay was the first person

The grand old man himself. Mr. C. Verran, seated on the step of one of his trucks at Verran's Corner about 1922.

to buy land at Island Bay and he purchased 40 acres from the River Plate Company about the turn of the century. The price was £8 per acre — the area was on the north of Beach Road and took in the waterfront.

Later it was found there was no legal access as the road was undedicated and the Land Company compensated him by a grant of £200 which was given to the Council for road formation.

Mr. Jarrett built his own house and established a large poultry farm. Afterwards he sold the house to a Mr. Molesworth who was the local milkman. In addition, he built summer baches, some of which he sold later on.

A Mr. Izant later bought the house from Mr. Molesworth and carried on as the local milkman from the 1920's on into the thirties. The house is now (1968) owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. George McLean.

Beach Road residents soon found they needed a wharf, so Mr. Jarrett and others supplied money, materials and manpower and, with the readily given approval of the Marine Department, built one themselves.





Later it was lengthened by the Island Bay Progressive League which functioned for many years. The League also built a public hall where many socials were held.

By the time the wharf was demolished in the early 1920's, people were able to use bus transport instead. At this time Beach Road was quite a centre. A Mr. Fred Andersen bought land opposite the League's social hall and built a house, shop and cabaret. Some of the timber used in the cabaret came from the old Thames Hotel in Queen Street, Auckland, which used to stand where the Dilworth Building now is. Mr. Andersen was a successful strawberry grower and ran a small farm as well.

At the top of Beach Road, on the corner of Rangatira Road, there was a general store which was opened before the one at Verran's Corner. In 1924 it was owned by a Miss McArthur.

### MANY INDUSTRIES

Over the years there have been a variety of industries in Birkdale. Probably one of the earliest was that of wine making by a Mr. Henry Beere.

When the Beere's settled in Birkdale Road in 1890 the property was covered in ti-tree and gumdiggers were working the property. The Beere's first house was a tent with a wooden floor.

In 1892 Mr. Beere planted Isabella grape cuttings and sowed wattles as windbreaks.

As the grapes flourished, he decided to make wine.

All the work was done by hand and the wine was sold in not less than 2 gallon lots at 20/- delivered. In bulk it was 6/- per gallon.

By 1914, 3,000 gallons a year were being produced on the property.

Tomatoes were also grown by Mr. Beere and sold for 2d a lb. His strawberries were 6d a wooden box.

Also about this period a butter factory was built by the Button family at the bottom of Vermont Road by the lagoon. However, there were not sufficient supplies of milk locally to keep it going.

Mr. George "Daddy" le Vesque established a sawmill on his property on Birkdale Road. Several houses in the district were built of the pinewood cut at the local mill.

Another sawmill operated into the mid 1920's known as "Bell's". Timber for this mill came from the Eskdale Road area.

Several orchardists operated canning factories, Mr. Hopkins, where the Ranch House is now, Mr. le Vesque and Mr. Shepherd are examples.

Prior to the First World War there was a nursery

near the site of the present Birkdale North School.

In 1935 the first bus to be built on the North shore was completed by Mr. R. V. Shepherd for Birkenhead Transport Ltd.

All the work, with the exception of the painting and upholstery was undertaken by Mr. Shepherd while Mr. B. Townsend did the blacksmith's work.

Over the years Mr. Shepherd also made and mended cricket bats for members of the various clubs.

It can be seen that Birkdale has played quite an important role in Birkenhead's development from the time the early pioneers settled there.

Its strawberry and fruit growing industry reached its peak probably towards 1920 and thus Birkdale deservedly earned the name, "The Fruit-garden of Auckland".

It is thought the name "Birkdale" naturally followed on as a Birkdale is a suburb of Birkenhead in England. However, the Birkenhead (New Zealand) Borough Council resolved, on August 8, 1889, to call that part of the borough from Rendall's Hill to Hellyers Creek: Birkdale.

One gets the impression that until fairly recently the people of Birkdale were left to their own resources and had to fend for themselves. For example:

They began the Blue Star Bus Company;  
They built their own public hall;

Two Birkdale newspapers have been published over the years, "The Beachcomber", and the Businessmen's Association paper "The Enterprise", which is still published fortnightly;

A well-formed cycle track which extended from Birkdale Road to Mokoia Road.

A distinctive feature of Birkdale is the number of wattles and pines which grow in the district — no doubt introduced as wind breaks in the early days as these species propagate themselves freely.

### "I REMEMBER"

The following reminiscences of the Birkdale of nearly half a century ago provides a delightful pen picture of people's daily lives in those times. It was written (1967) by a man, recently retired, who was born in Birkdale and who has lived there all his life:—

Forty-eight years ago (he writes) the sunny side of Birkdale — or Beach Haven as it is now known — was just a mass of second growth tea-tree, and the only roads through it led to the Beach Haven wharf to meet the boats that plied between there and Auckland City.

Even in those days, Birkdale folk were very keen on growing fruit for the early settlers had done wonders with the gum land.

By 1920 life was not quite as hard as in the gum digging days for water had been laid on from Lake Pupuke, but the party line telephone was still the chief means of communication, electric power was still six years away and the "circuit route" — Birkdale-Kiwi-Rangatira roads — was little more than a cart track spread with road metal that had been mixed with sand and shell to bind it.

The side roads were not covered until later and then only with clinker from the Sugar Works and carted by William Bambury in an old chain drive tipless Ford truck. I can still see Mr. P. Thomas fighting the Tramway Road mud with his motor bike and sidecar.

To see Birkdale in its heyday as a fruit growing district was a grand sight. All the hedges trimmed, the homes well kept, and the orchards clean and tidy, especially in the Springtime. Not everyone grew fruit in the early days, although Birkdale was recognised as the home of strawberries and many families lived off them solely. One man who grew them in Kiwi Road told me he had a good season, lived well and banked £100 — after working like a slave from May to February.

For a social side to life, people used to stop

to chat in Birkdale Road or get together in the old Methodist church and Sunday school hall which stood on the site of the present Presbyterian Church.

This not only catered for well attended Church and Sunday school, but also for the Girl Guides, Y.M.C.A., and any other activities of that part of the Borough. Mrs. Molly Usher now of Northcote was the Guide Captain for many years. A good job she did for the local girls.

The Y.M. was always a well-run youth centre and Cliff Utting, the late Geoff Bentley, Roly Bentley and Eric Smith were a few I can recall who did sterling work for the district's youth.

Quite a few school concerts I attended there also. Until the new Birkdale Hall was built in 1925, it served the district well. As I remember, apart from indoor activities, the only other sports catered for in the area in the early days were cricket and cycling.

Hilder's shop, the first shop at Beach Haven shopping centre. When opened by Mr. and Mrs. Hilder in 1924 the shop window was what had previously been the living room window.





The original Birkdale Hall at the corner of Lancaster and Puriri roads on a section given to the community by Mr. Hopkins Snr about 1930.

### LOCAL SPORT

Cricket was played in a paddock in Tramway Road but later transferred to Beach Haven Road opposite Melba Road. A cycling club used the circuit. This club was run successfully for many years and ably administered by the late Sid Collins, Lionel Culpan, a Mr. Peterson, and others. It has now been absorbed by the Birkenhead Club under the guidance of Ted Fitzgerald.

The Shepherd boys, Ralph and Harry, plus Dawson Roberts of Glenfield were some of the earlier administrators of cricket. This club, too, has now been absorbed by Birkenhead and has lost its old identity.

St. Peter's Church was on its present site, having been moved from Chelsea Village, and with the Methodist Church, were the only churches on the Birkdale side of Highbury.

Verran's Corner was the bus terminus until the Blue Star buses began to operate around the circuit and only one shop was at the corner. The present bus depot was built on the Verran's stable site.

Mr. Verran, senior, was the last of the family to retain horse drawn vehicles and drove every day to his Brassey Road depot.

Really, life in the horse-drawn days was different, so peaceful and quiet.

Under the guidance of the late Duke Souster and his band of volunteers, the Birkdale Hall was opened in 1925. This was a true district effort — the section was given to the district by the late Mr. Hopkins, senior, and the building erected on it had everything, even a cinema projection box.

The locals had regular Cinema, dancing alternate Saturdays and many concerts at the hall.

After it was opened, about 1928, the Women's Institute was formed. It is still a very active organisation today. Mr. W. G. Morrison and

Mr. Cramp taught Sunday School there until it was burnt down. They both did a splendid job.

Beach Haven was well established by 1926-1927. Firstly as the weekenders' retreat but there has always been a few permanents.

The Blue Star Bus Company was a real winner for the district for, apart from one bus which took the first day pupils to the newly constituted Northcote Junior High School no other buses ever went further west than Verran's Corner.

The Blue Star was a local effort and such men as Bert Mitchell, Bob Naylor, Tom Fotheringham and Harold Hannah were real trail blazers in Birkdale.

The little Morris buses did a good job and after a few years of trial and error, were amalgamated with buses run by Les Purdy and Tom Halliday to form what was the forerunner of today's Birkenhead Transport.

The depression was no respecter of districts, or folk, and it left its mark on Birkdale. Apart from those who were really established, most folk left the soil and sought a livelihood further afield. As a result the district changed, the farms went back and it never returned to its former condition. Even dairying largely disappeared. Only the milkmen, who in those days sold their own milk, kept herds going. For many years Mr. Clay, who later returned to South Africa, and Robert Aplin delivered the home grown milk. More recently Laurie Castleton did likewise, doing so until after the War.

No doubt Mr. Clay would be the best remembered milkman with his umbrella on wet days. He delivered the first bottle of milk I ever saw, and I can remember he was always scared stiff his horse would take fright.

The coming of the new bus service to Highbury marked the end of an era. The launch service to Beach Haven wharf slowly curtailed its run.



First, in 1922, Hunter's launch after many years of service to Lower Birkdale, stopped running, then Captain Gilling gave it up and, although Bob Maynell kept going, the river service to Beach Haven faded out after the War.

### GOOD SHOPS

Shops have always been adequate for local needs. Apart from the one at Verran's Corner, Doris Frame had a shop in Birkdale Road, the one at the top of Beach Road was run by Miss McArthur and Fred Andersen had a dance hall and shop at his present address at the bottom of Beach Road. Mr. W. J. Hilder opened a Post Office Store in 1925 at the corner that bears his name today.

Birkdale Tennis Pavilion has always been in use at John Kay's Park, so named after an early settler who, I have been told, broke his property in and worked at Chelsea as well until it became self supporting. One can imagine the trials and tribulations of the early pioneers, especially the pre-water reticulation days.

One organisation I will always remember was a dramatic club at Verran's Corner. It was a very well organised club with a most enthusiastic membership. Bill Garrett, Joe Payne and the Schorman boys, Geoff. Bentley and many others, gave many hours up rehearsing and I remember, as a youth, enjoying every minute of it.

By the 1930's we had a new Cabaret at Beach

Haven, which was a great attraction for many years, for Beach Haven, by then, was partly settled with permanent residents.

The Aeroview Estate was one subdivision. It lay dormant for years until the post-World War II boom saw it develop into what it is now.

Wally Archer and Jack McMillan were two post-World War II builders who saw Birkdale's potential and made the shopping centre as it is today. Many others have followed and today homes have replaced the strawberry gardens of yesterday.

No longer is our old postman Bill Myers riding 4-legged horsepower delivering the mail to the west of Verran's Corner. Nor will we see the like of Mr. Freeguard riding his horse calling for the weekly grocery order.

Still, to relive my days in Birkdale would be a thrill despite the fact that stone bruises were the order of our bootless era.

There was no child allowance or fringe benefits but to be able to buy a bag of delicious apples from Phil Lee for 1/- or call at Mr. Hay's to sample a persimmon, go for a swim at any beach and have the place almost to yourself, would be really living.

All the folk I knew as a boy, some of whom are still with us, I salute as true pioneers whose toiling made possible the conditions and progress of today.

Birkdale Cricket Club, 1931-1932. Left to right, back row: B. Ireland, D. Stott, H. Stott, O. Laurie, and R. V. Shepherd. Front row: J. Avery, F. A. Osmond (vice captain), H. M. Shepherd (captain), C. Patten, and W. Worthington. Not shown here were: L. Cooper and G. Woodhams.



# ANECDOTES

ANECDOTES in this chapter have come from people who once lived in the district.

The following is an extract from the history of the Hammond family, compiled by A. M. Hammond in 1930.

"In the year 1878, father purchased an area of about 30 acres near the waterfront. There was only one house in the locality at the time and it was owned by a Mrs. Tizard."

Mr. Hammond then described what the district looked like when his father, W. F. Hammond, settled here:—

"We journeyed across to Woodside (Northcote) and probably what is now the Onewa Road area, via Stoke's Point after the house had been partly built and settled down to life in the back-blocks. There was only a rough road down to Tizard's house which was our outlet also. The timber for the house had been landed on the beach and pulled up the hill on a sledge by horses. The house was still unfinished when we all took up abode there so that the inconvenience, especially to the womenfolk, must have been very considerable."

To quote Hammond again:—

"Our nearest neighbour on one side was Mrs. Tizard, about half a mile away, and in the other direction there was a farmlet where Highbury Corner now stands. In front of us, behind us, to left and right of us there was nothing else but tea-tree. In the winter, the clay of that clay-ridden district stuck to us like glue. Life in Birkenhead was hard. There was firewood to be cut and carried up from the gullies, gardening, digging paddocks and ploughing. There was no spare time in those days."

Mr. Hammond also records that his father-in-law bought 20 or so acres on Glenfield Road opposite Onewa Road. The in-laws were Mr. and Mrs. Forgham, and it is said they called their home "Highbury", a name which has been given the area ever since.

Miss Frances Hayman offers an account of a colourful couple who lived at the bottom of Arawa Street some 45 years ago.

"Clement Wragge, a strange bearded man, came from Queensland where he was the Government meteorologist until 1900.

"During the time he lived at Birkenhead, he was the official weather prophet for the N.Z. Herald.

"At the end of the street in which I lived," said Miss Hayman, "was a sign-board with a hand-painted sign, pointing to the left. It read:—

"Welcome to the beautiful Botanical Gardens—

The tropical Paradise of the South Seas.

Admission 1/-

Children 9d.

"The bearded weather prophet, with his Indian wife and son, Kismet, lived in a house in the grounds. In addition to the entrance fee, a charge was made to enter a museum, and also to gaze through a telescope into the heavens from the prophet's tower. Tea-rooms were always open, and to those anxious about their future, the prophet's wife, a lady of considerable grace and charm, and reputed to be a princess, officiated over the reading of cups. On these occasions she looked most regal, dressed always in bright Indian apparel. Outside, their small dog, Wagga, would show off his tricks and sit begging tit-bits from the visitors.

"AN ADDED attraction was to be rowed in a dinghy around Willow Bay. My brothers and I often did the rowing, but the collection was taken up by the prophet before the guests left the slipway.

"All the paths in the garden were named in Latin, excepting the "Lover's" section. A path leading to this secluded spot was named "Lovers Lane". A thatched hut was named "Lovers Abode", and under a towering palm tree was the "Lovers Seat". This rustic seat was so small and frail that only the lightest of couples could sit on it with confidence.

"Acting as guide to his patrons, the prophet, with a red turban on his head, would lead the way through bush and fern, and with outstretched arms say:

"Now, wander at will, but for goodness sake don't get lost! But first let me pick you some bananas.' He would then escort them to a palm upon which bananas had never really matured, and exclaim: 'Oh dear, they have all gone—those dreadful children next door have raided the palm again.'

"The party would then emerge from the thickets and cross rustic bridges which spanned the gullies

# Gleanings from the Past

Chelsea lower reservoir, foreground, looking back to Highbury. The works are just out of the picture to the left. In the background is Glenfield, left, and East Coast Bays, right.  
— Astra Publicity photo 1953.



and connected them with pleasant footpaths winding in all directions.

"Our property adjoined the Botanical Gardens, therefore it was not surprising that on the way to the beach, we would encounter some wanderers who ate our fruit and sheltered beneath the trees. When they were informed that they were on private property, their faces registered shocked expressions, for tropical ferns and palms, once discreetly planted by the prophet, added to the illusion that he possessed all the neighbouring land.

"It was under one of these ferns that one night, Wagga, then old and almost blind, crawled and lay down on the dry leaves and died. We were all very touched as we stood and watched his mistress standing with lantern held high, gazing down at the still, white form. With tears rolling down her cheeks, she wailed, Oh Wagga, Oh Wagga, and then slowly retraced her steps, the yellow light from the lantern shining on her brilliant red sari.

"THERE WAS a period in the borough's history when the Pound was at the corner of Kauri Road and Makoia Road.

"The ex-poundkeeper told me with much mirth that his first job on taking over the pound was impounding the Mayor's horse—It cost Mr. Walton (the then Mayor) 8/- to get it out."

Birkenhead has a haunted house, an old derelict house which had been abandoned with everything in it—shelves of books, furniture and even a grandfather clock!

According to our informant, it was a lovely,

sunny, Sunday afternoon and for something else to do, he and his family decided to go across the mudflats to have a peep inside this mysterious old house.

Imagine their feelings as they pushed the door open and stepped inside—there were all the shelves of books, thickly coated with dust, the windows, still heavily draped, and which had been made good use of by the mason bees for building mud nurseries. Cobwebs were everywhere.

They took a further step inside, the rotting floor creaked, and all of a sudden the grandfather clock started to chime! They got the fright of their lives and retraced their steps hurriedly, deciding never to return, convinced the house must be haunted.

Later they realised it was through stepping on the old creaky floor which caused sufficient vibration to set the grandfather clock in motion.

IN THE early days the police station was in Northcote and Birkenhead shared the same policeman.

The story goes that there was once a very colourful policeman named Denny Rolls who endeared himself to all because of his genial disposition. He was Irish and rather corpulent, but he did his best to ensure law and order prevailed, although his methods were perhaps unconventional.

One day Denny was seen standing side on to a thin lamp post and peering down the road at a suspect. When asked what he was doing, he replied—"Sh! Oi'm in disguise!"



Yet another story about him concerns a runaway horse which galloped down the road and crashed over the side of the Birkenhead wharf into the sea. Denny, who was standing nearby, quickly seized a lifebelt from the wharf and threw it to the struggling animal.

FRED, one of the sons of the original Pugh family, was the local correspondent for the "Star" and the "Herald". He must have been very fit, for it is said he delivered the Stars on foot from the wharf along Glenfield Road, down Eskdale Road to the far end of Birkdale to Verrans Corner, down Waipa Street, back home—six days a week.

He spent the mornings delivering the mail in a horse and sulky.

David, one of the younger sons, was the first boy to swim across the harbour from Northcote Wharf to Shelley Beach in 1909. In addition, he was a champion double-sculls rower about 1912.

Because David spent so much of his young life in aquatic pursuits, his mother used to barrack him, saying "it's a wonder you don't grow scales".

According to Mr. David Pugh, 60 years ago, fishing off Birkenhead was really worthwhile. One had only to go half a mile off Birkenhead Wharf and within half an hour it was possible to catch over 50 snapper! Another sport which brought

marvellous results was jaggig mullet off the old Birkenhead wharf. They could be seen leaping out of the water between Birkenhead and Northcote wharves in those days.

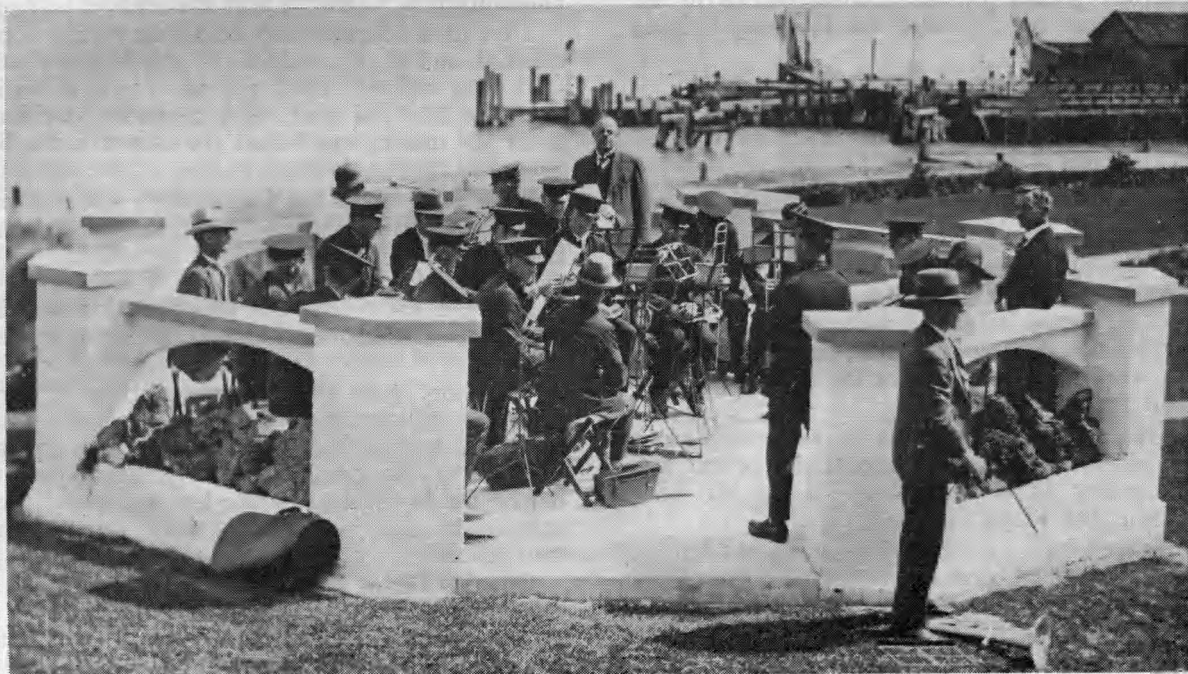
A fishing net hauled between Chelsea and Northcote wharves usually resulted in a wonderful harvest of fish of many different species—from gurnets to stingrays—and it is said the flavour of the rock oysters in those days in those parts delighted connoisseurs.

Older residents will remember when the Governor-General visited Chelsea in the early 1920s. The Vice-Regal party came to Birkenhead by boat and were transported by Messrs' Verran's taxi and Mr. Hadfield's private car to Chelsea.

THERE WAS the character who lived in a sod hut in Birkdale and who carried out simple maintenance by slapping wet mud into the holes as they appeared in the side of the hut. It has also been said that the same person jumped fully clothed into the water tank to escape from a swarm of bees.

There was a character named "Meek", an 'old junk and bottle man' who worked the district bent over a wheel barrow. It was surprising the large area he covered pushing a heavy barrow. It is said he went on holiday once, carrying his personal belongings on the barrow, and walked right round Riverhead to Auckland and caught the ferry home.

The Birkenhead Band, playing at Hinemoa Park 1928.



SIR FRANCIS Chichester, the well-known lone-handed aviator and yachtsman, once lived at Beach Haven, boarding at a house nearest the Beach Haven wharf. In fact he left his Beach Haven home early in the morning en route to Hobsonville from where he started his first solo flight to Japan.

Late one Sunday afternoon in December, 1956, the residents of Birkdale were all agog when an Auster plane made a surprise landing in a rough cow paddock on Mr. Morrison's farm.

The pilot, being a practical young man, could not see any sense in landing at Mangere and spending over an hour or more to get home, so he 'touched down' near to his parent's home. The young pilot was Russen, son of Mr. W. J. and the late Mrs. Hilder of Beach Haven.

An amusing incident occurred one day many years ago when Tom Horton who, in spite of having both feet amputated in a sawmill accident, carried on as a carrier.

He was loading up his cart when he observed a fellow carrier who was a vegetarian, struggling with a big sack of wheat. He was making such heavy weather of it, that Tom went to his assistance and in no time flung the heavy bag up on to the cart, merely remarking "beef before beans".

A genial soul once lived in the district who owned a horse on which he rode everywhere. One Christmas he was in high spirits. He had been to a children's Christmas party where he had performed the duties of Santa Claus.

Imagine how excited the children were to see Santa riding out to Birkdale.

To make the Christmas scene more realistic, Santa had poured pounds of flour over the horse to give the impression that he had ridden through a snow storm!

It is not everybody who would care to go shopping on the back of a bull, but shortly before World War I, Fred Anderson of Island Bay thought nothing of it.

In the early days of the Birkenhead Band, its repertoire was somewhat limited. When the Sugar Company had its annual picnic, the band turned out and provided a few lively tunes which were repeated over and over again. On one such occasion as the picnickers were strolling along the wharf preparatory to boarding the ferry, the band struck up—"Work, for the night is coming".

This was too much for one of the picnickers, for he was heard to exclaim, "Come on home Missus, I can work for the Sugar Works all the week without hearing it played all day".

WHEN HEKE's war broke out in the north in the early 1840s and 20 years later when war

again broke out between the Maori and Pakeha, Maoris would congregate in large numbers at any vantage point.

Pakeha fears were natural when this situation happened on Kauri Point and soldiers were dispatched to dispel them. They probably landed in the little inlet we know today as Soldiers Bay, and may even have camped there—or they may have rowed up the tidal creek which runs some distance up behind the hill along which Rangatira Road now goes.

There is still evidence of trenches on a steep ridge there that was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sam Christensen (situated a few hundred yards down from Kauri Park entrance in Rangatira Road).

From the Council Minutes dated 27th November, 1923—Council resolved that a notice be erected at Onetaunga Beach, Kauri Point, to the effect that anybody swimming there 'shall be attired in a two-piece bathing suit known as the Canadian costume'.

In 1910, the Rotorua Nurseries forwarded 250 Ponderosa Pine trees to be planted in the Borough on Arbor Day. Where they were planted, if they ever were, remains a mystery.

On July 25th, 1933, the State Forest Department gave the Borough Council 1,000 Redwood and 1,000 Douglas Firs and these were to be planted on and around Domain Road, an extension of Balmain Road. A few Redwoods have been noticed in the area, but there are no Douglas Firs. Perhaps the situation did not suit them.

**IT IS not certain who was the first doctor in the district.**

However, when a Mr. Austin Jenkinson met with an accident in the early 1880s, he had to be taken over to Auckland by row boat to Ponsonby wharf, in those day the city terminal and there he was attended by a doctor.

It is known also that there were several cases of typhoid fever in Chelsea village in the 1890s and a Dr. Bond was in attendance, but whether or not he was resident is uncertain.

About the turn of the century, however, in Hauraki Street, a Dr. Carolyn lived where the Police Station now is, Dr. Player lived behind where the Anglican Church is, and a Dr. Murray lived nearby.

Dr. Mickle, who lived in Havelock Street, was practising there during the First World War and into the early 1920s. About this period, Dr. Craven came to the district.

Today, there are 12 doctors practising in the Borough.

# Roads, Transport, Horses and Carriers

AS Birkenhead's population increased, so then new roads were formed.

In the very early days when the whaleboats began operating between the City and Stokes' Point (Northcote), Paddy Heath's Point, a mile north of today's toll plaza (Barry's Point) and Flagstaff (Devonport), it is not surprising to find the first roads spread from these points.

One of the first roads on the North Shore was from Devonport to the Wade (Silverdale).

Northcote Road went from Stokes' Point over towards Takapuna and a road of sorts extended from it up the hill (now Pupuke Road) to Highbury, continuing up the ridge to Verrans Corner, while a clay formed road or track led down to a little beach at the foot of the cliffs where Hinemoa Park now stands.

Settlers living near Paddy Heath's Point came up to Takapuna to go over to Birkenhead, otherwise they had to cross about a mile of boggy land to get to Northcote Road.

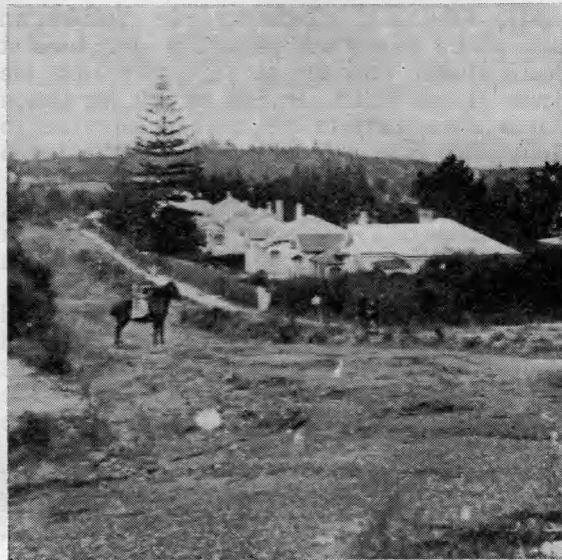
As one can well imagine, those clay tracks and roads were a sea of mud in wet weather and many a time branches of tea-tree were laid across the road to enable carts to proceed.

LESS THAN 50 years ago, Highbury was a steep hill surrounded by clay roads and it was not till the late 1920s that the roads were reconstructed and tar-sealed.

When the Birkenhead Borough was formed in 1888, its main task was to improve the road from the wharf to Highbury. Apart from sugar works ash which was bought for 2/3 a yard delivered, the Council obtained scoria brought to Birkenhead by scow.

Before that, however, a soft metal was obtained from Hill's farm in Glenfield Road which is now part of Memorial Park.

This soft metal was used as a base and a clay mixed with shell was spread over the road. This



Looking down Balmain Road — and its mud — just before World War I.

was also used for footpaths. This bleached white and had the added advantage of being easy to see at night.

The last road to be treated by this method was Kiwi Road and the material was landed at Birkdale wharf. This would have been about mid-1920s.

The roading system in Birkenhead can be likened to the vertebrae of a man—the main roads running along the ridge and the numerous side roads being the ribs. Most of the side roads are marked 'No exit'.

Takapuna had an enormous natural asset with its scoria pits, for all the roads on that side of the North Shore were built on scoria. Later, when the heavy traffic increased, hand-spalled blue metal was also obtainable locally.

Metal knapping went on for many years in Takapuna and a number of men were so employed. The ruling price was 3/- per yard. The first steam crusher came into the district about 1898.

It is appropriate to mention here that surveyor and engineer, Mr. W. F. Hammond played a big part in planning a number of the roads in the Highbury - Rawene Road area in the 1880s - 1890s. Later, two of his sons carried on with his work at Birkenhead.

The name Highbury, today a shopping centre, was the name of the homestead of Mrs. W. F. Hammond's father, Mr. Forgham, opposite Zion Hill Methodist Church.



This postcard, posted in 1911, shows Hinemoa Street — as it is now — and the junction with Bridge View Road.



The same view as the picture above but taken about five years later.

Hinemoa Street, or Hauraki Street as it was known until 1967, about 1928, taken from Highbury.



**F**ROM the earliest days of North Shore settlement, there has been a transport service between Birkenhead and Albany or Lucas Creek as it was originally called.

In very early days mail was first taken by pack horse, but if there were passengers the contractor would put on either a gig or light spring cart.

Mr. Tom Horton of Banks Street and Mr. Bill Goodall in Eskdale Road both carried the mail.

It is on record that when Mr. Horton was unable to go, Mrs. Horton would ride out sidesaddle to see that the mail was delivered.

In 1918 Mr. Len Foley secured the contract. He first ran a horse waggon over the clay roads and as well as the mail carried passengers (the fare 2/- single 3/- return) delivered the rural mail and groceries, bread, parcels, meat, medicines and the daily paper. He boasted he ran for nine years and never missed a boat.

Birkenhead Transport now runs through Glenfield to Wairau Road and Greenhithe.



Foley's bus, carrying passengers and mail from Birkenhead to Albany. This picture was taken in 1919.

Below, the Birkdale Methodist picnic to the Auckland Domain about 1913. Mr. Charles Verran, son of the founder of the carrying business, is on the box.





**B**IRKENHEAD'S first public transport service was a horse and "Pagnall"\* cart between Chelsea village and Birkenhead wharf — before the Chelsea passenger wharf was built — and run by Mr. Horton senior of Banks Street. It began some years after Northcote's. Birkenhead was a difficult place in which to run a service because of the hilly nature of the country.

Two licences were granted during 1910, one to Mr. Bill Goodall to run between Birkenhead wharf and Coronation Road, and one to Mr. A. Oldham to run between the wharf and Verran's Corner. The fare in each case was 3d to Highbury and 3d from there to the Verran's Corner terminal with nothing less than 6d after 7 p.m. It was not a very paying proposition.

In 1914 Messrs. Millar and Dunn came on the run to Verran's Corner and for a time they were subsidised by the Council at the rate of £6 per month. On June 13, 1915, they notified the Council they were ceasing operations on July 3.

Millar and Dunn stabled their horses in Tom Church's stables at Chelsea village gates, and the Glenfield horses were stabled near Moore Street.

Jack McFetridge, Goodall's driver also had a ply for hire cab licence.

The end of horse transport was near for on February 24, 1915, the Mayor reported to the Council that as an experiment, a motor bus had made a successful trip from the wharf to Verran's

\* A Pagnall cart was a two-wheeled vehicle carrying up to six people, three on the driver's bench facing forward, and three on a plank lying across the body of the cart and facing backwards.

Corner and back. He then suggested to the Council that it should undertake a motor bus service as a municipal venture. The Council, however, did not agree to this. Members favoured encouraging a private company.

At this stage Mr. Tom Smith, Mr. Stewart and others were engaged in forming the Birkenhead Motor Bus and Transit Company with headquarters in Onewa Road. A list of stopping places between the Wharf and Verran's Corner and Glenfield Road, also a timetable and a scale of fares, was submitted to the Council, which gave its approval, subject to a few slight alterations, in October, 1915.

At the request of the Council the new company ran a horse bus service for three months pending the inauguration of the motor bus service; for this it received a subsidy of £27/10/0.

The opening day was a very special occasion. Council members and the company's directors and shareholders were driven to Albany for a function of felicitations and afternoon tea.

Unfortunately, the motor bus service did not run smoothly. The roads were poor and the buses were always breaking down with a result that the timetable was not adhered to.

Later the company was reorganised, obtained more modern buses and was renamed the "Marine Suburbs Bus Company". Mr. Tom Smith was manager and Mr. Herby Eccles the mechanic. There was still dissatisfaction over timetables and fares until in 1927 a Mr. Hill came to Birkenhead with two small Morris buses — one

Mr. Verran Senior (with the beard and standing by his cart) outside his shop at the wharf about 1906.





held 15 seated passengers and the other 13. At this time there was no motor omnibus traffic act and Mr. Hill began on the Marine Suburbs run — his buses met every boat and plied between Birkenhead Wharf and Verran's Corner at a cheaper rate.

After various ups and downs his buses were taken over by a group of Birkdale residents who formed a company called "The Blue Star Bus Company". Very soon a bus ran an additional service to the Birkdale wharf.

This resulted in a war between the two bus companies out of which the public gained the most — one company put on a community bus from Balmain Road to the wharf and the other company free taxis. In this duel the Blue Star Company came off best and in February, 1928, the Marine Suburbs Company notified the Council that they were ceasing operations from midnight on that date.

Later the Blue Star got into difficulties and its shares were bought by Mr. C. Inwards.

Other companies came on the run to Glenfield and Albany but these were gradually bought and absorbed by the Blue Star Company. The Company is now known as the Birkenhead Transport Company with its headquarters at Verran's Corner. It serves Birkenhead, Birkdale, Glenfield and Northcote with all traffic going over the Harbour Bridge. The Company now has a fleet of thirty-eight buses.

In 1963 the Company gave all old age pensioners a special concession fare of sixpence to travel anywhere and any distance between the



The picture above is believed to have been taken about 1918 and shows one of the borough's first buses with pneumatic tyres at the Birkenhead wharf. Below is Mr. Verran senior driving a wagon he bought from a Mr. MacKenzie in 1906. He and his sons served the district as carriers for about 50 years.

hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. These were handed out by the Mayor at a special ceremony in the Council Chambers. Mr. and Mrs. Organ, two old residents of Tennyson Street, were the first to receive them.



# HOUSES, old style . . .

**M**ENTION is made in the "Cyclopaedia of N.Z. (1901)" that near the ferry wharf and on the surrounding high land, many of Auckland's most successful business men have large and handsome residences.

Sixty years later, many of those residences are still to be seen—the majority have been modernised and all have become extremely valuable properties.

Some of the best known residents were Mr. Wragge, whose tropical garden in Arawa Street attracted many visitors. Nearby lived Mr. Hayward, well known in the entertainment world. W. F. Hammond, the architect and surveyor, and the Tizard family.

Mr. Hawkins lived in a large house which was built by Mr. M. Souster and is in a perfect state of preservation today.

The Le Roy's old homestead still stands at the corner of Hauraki Street and Valley Road, while a well known financier and politician at the beginning of the century Mr. Witheford, lived at the corner of Havelock Street and Marama Terrace.

Here, too, the Chambers family settled in the early 1880s—a son, Mr. Eric Chambers still lives in the locality.

A well known building in Hinemoa Street

which did service as a maternity hospital for a number of years was the "Gables". Now converted to a convalescent hospital for children, it was formerly the family home of the Campbell family.

Many contemporary homes have been built in this area where, in the comparatively short space of a hundred years or so ago, people lived in nikau whares.

From about 1896 to the time of the First World War, the majority of the houses were either "villas" or "colonial". Villas were built to a set design with a bay window on the left and a verandah on the right hand side. For a little variation, others would have the verandah on the left and the bay window on the right. Many of these are still to be seen in the borough. The earlier colonial house was built with a high roof, two windows in front and the door in the middle with or without a verandah.

Mr. Frank Robertson built a number of the villa type of houses and the late Ernest Swindail did most of the chimneys and brickwork.

The old and the modern. One of the fine old mansions in lower Hinemoa Street with a modern house built in what was once its front garden.



# From orchards, a suburb grew

LAND at Birkenhead and Northcote was found to be particularly suitable for fruit growing and so it is little wonder that by the turn of the century many acres had been put down in orchards.

In some cases, the would-be orchardists worked at the Chelsea sugar works until such time as their trees bore fruit. The going was hard in more ways than one.

Strawberry growing also became a remunerative occupation when it was found that the land which had been covered in tea-tree was most suitable for this purpose. Thus, in Birkdale particularly, strawberries were grown on a large scale.

So big had the fruit growing industry become from the late 19th century onwards that a canning factory (the forerunner of Thompson & Hills, one of the biggest jam manufacturers in N.Z.) began in Thompson's copper near the Birkenhead wharf. Some ten years later, another canning factory was established by the late James Levesque and his sons who were for many years strawberry and fruit growers at Birkdale.

Growing strawberries is hard work at the best of times and in those early days harvesting and marketing caused many headaches and backaches! From mid-October to well on into January, the strawberry grower would virtually be up at dawn picking. The same evening the fruit had to be packed.

School children helped with the picking, and during the season it was the custom to begin school earlier in the morning, take half an hour only for lunch, and then be dismissed at 2 p.m. to enable them to pick strawberries. It is interesting also to note that the Birkdale school badge was a strawberry leaf.

In the early stages of the industry the strawberry growers used a somewhat large and clumsy wooden box which, filled with strawberries, used to be sold at 2/- to 2/6 a box by the Queen Street fruiterers. The grower received less than half that sum for his fruit.

This state of affairs went on until 1906 when the growers formed a co-operative association to market their produce on better lines and arrangements were made for holding daily sales in Sanford's market buildings in Customs Street West.

The new system of sale made the grower practically independent of the seller. In addition, it enabled him to buy his manures and other neces-

sities at wholesale prices. The containers or 'chips' were redesigned and were made at the Blind Institute from light Kahikatea timber which had been split into strips.

The association began with 30 growers, but increased to ten times that many in three years.

Here are the names of some of the fruitgrowers over the last 50 years: J. G. Kay, Gummer Bros., Hopkins, H R., J. S. and W. J. Levesque, E. C. Walton, Clay, C. E. Abbott, T. M. Shepherd, Fair, Beere (grapes), F. Hayman, Stewart, Bagot, Dent, Payne, Bentley, A. Merz, Burrell, McGregor Bros., Jessop, Dale, Mumme, Revell, F. Andersen, Mayall, E. C. Walton, H. L. Colledge, F. A. H. Jones, A. Dale, W. J. McCullough, E. Hall, J. G. Kay, A. Henley.

WITH SO many fruit growers in the district, it is not surprising that a move was made to enlarge the functions of the Fruitgrowers Association. Thus on August 23, 1912, a meeting was held in the Birkdale School to discuss proposals and Mr. E. C. Walton was voted to the chair.

Mr. T. M. Shepherd moved and Mr. E. Wall seconded the motion that "they formed themselves into a Fruitgrowers Association". J. Kay and others spoke of the advantages of such an association.

The first committee consisted of: President, E. C. Walton; Vice-Presidents, J. G. Kay and W. J. McCullough; Secretary and Treasurer, T. M. Shepherd. Committee, C. E. Abbott, G. Dale, H. Colledge, W. Levesque, W. Wall.

This Association later became a branch of the Waitemata Co-operative Association. The association was still operating in 1925, when Lisbon lemon trees cost 3/6 each and blood and bone was £10 per ton.

In the early 1940s, the Minister of Agriculture visited Birkdale and spent the afternoon with members of the association.

By 1965, the change from strawberry beds to suburban homes and gardens was in full swing and there were only seven members left in the association. Obviously it had outlived its usefulness, and in August 1965, the Birkdale Fruitgrowers and Commercial Gardeners Association disbanded.

The last remaining members of the association were: Messrs. F. Andersen, J. Dakers, P. Payne, J. McGregor, R. Bentley, H. Mumme, H. Morrison and H. Campbell.



# ★   F I R S T S   ★

**I**N THE context of histories, one of the most often asked questions is "Who (or what) was the first in the borough?" On this page many of these intriguing questions are answered:—

FIRST Town Clerk: Mr. Thomas Seaman.

FIRST man employed on borough roads: Mr. Simpson.

FIRST metal was quarried from Mr. Hill's farm, now part of the Memorial Park opposite Waratah Road.

FIRST tar used in 1890, on a footpath near Birkenhead wharf. One barrel of tar was used and covered with fine sugar works ash.

FIRST finger post set up on October 31, 1895, on a pine tree at Highbury corner. The Glenfield Road sign was to Lucas Creek (now Albany). The Mokoia Road sign would be to Hellyers Creek (now Beach Haven).

FIRST "Moonlight Ferry Trip" was on January 5, 1896, to help finance borough footpaths. The boat "Eaglehawk" was provided free by the ferry company. The music was supplied by J. A. Beale. Proceeds £6.0.0.

FIRST Policeman mentioned in Council minutes was Sergeant J. A. Kelly.

FIRST general store was at Birkenhead wharf kept by Mr. Tom Smith.

FIRST Borough by-law against riding cycles on the footpaths was passed in 1889.

FIRST ply-for-hire service was run by Mr. Tom Horton. He used to take people between Chelsea village and Birkenhead wharf by horse drawn cart before Chelsea passenger wharf was built.

FIRST Harbour Board representative for Birkenhead was Mr. J. H. Witherford in 1891.

FIRST Council Chambers were built in 1906 by Mr. F. A. Pitt — the price was £161.

FIRST meeting in the new offices was on June 18, 1906. In honour of the occasion the Council was presented with the Mayoral chair which is still in use.

FIRST public telephone box was erected outside the old post office in Hauraki Street in October, 1928. The Council complained that it was an obstruction on the footpath. The telephone was operated by 3d in the slot and it was so busy that it was soon realised that Highbury also needed a telephone booth.

FIRST person to qualify for the maternity benefit when it was introduced was Mrs. Brownie Sharp of Beach Haven who gave birth to twins at 12.5 a.m. on D-Day.

FIRST butchers shop was near Birkenhead wharf and was kept by Mr. George Thompson.

FIRST chemist shop was kept by a Mr. Ellis and was on the corner of Harbour View Road and Hinemoa Street.

FIRST baker's shop was in the two story building on the corner of Hinemoa Street and Marama Terrace.

FIRST borough council meeting was held in the Zion Hill Methodist Sunday school room.

FIRST public gas lamps were in use in 1906. Twelve lamps were authorised from Birkenhead wharf to Roseberry Avenue.

FIRST Council flag pole was given by Mr. John Taylor and erected in 1918.

FIRST traffic inspector in uniform was Mr. Alf Waller.

FIRST kerbside petrol pump was installed by the Marine Suburbs garage in Onewa Road in February, 1926.

FIRST bus shelter was built at Hilder's Corner where the Methodist Church now stands. It was built by relief-work labour in the early 1930's and was later moved to the corner of Huia and Tramway roads.

FIRST electric power was switched on at a public ceremony in the borough on December 23, 1926. The Council resolved that there should be 98 street lights costing £368.5.0.



**T**HE area where the Chelsea sugar refinery now stands was known as Wawaroa in the early days.

A militia Captain de Jersey Grut settled there and farmed the property from about 1856 until the early 1860's when he moved to Orewa.

The small peninsula on which the refinery was built was once skirted by a creek which used to be tidal for about a quarter of a mile into the bush. Known as Duck Creek, it was dammed to provide water for the refinery and the whole estate became a water catchment area.

The history of the refinery goes back to 1881 when Edward Knox, chairman of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Sydney, visited Auck-

Aerial view of the Chelsea Works about 1933 with the "village" left foreground.

land with a proposal to establish a refinery here. At that time all New Zealand's refined sugar was imported from overseas, mainly Australia and Mauritius.

During his visit Mr. Knox purchased as a site for the new factory, 160 acres near "the new suburb of Birkenhead". The site had a deep water frontage to Waitemata Harbour and in Duck Creek a copious supply of fresh water.

Before any building could begin 120,000 cubic yds. of clay had to be removed to provide a level site. This was a considerable undertaking in those

# Jobs for Birkenhead

*The*

# SUGAR WORKS

*Story*

days and a whole ridge was cut away to fill in a lagoon and to build out the approaches for wharves into the harbour.

Bricks were made on the site, 1,500,000 of them, for the buildings and for the construction of the two dams across Duck Creek.

This large building scheme gave employment to many people. In the beginning the company supplied the men with tents for shelter, but as soon as it was practicable, more permanent structures were erected and soon a whole village had sprung up.

It was situated on a spur, the 35 houses being laid out on either side of one street, facing each other. As all these quaint little cottages looked alike it was sometimes difficult for a newcomer to distinguish one from the other.

Later a picket fence ran the full length of the village on either side.

Many a story has been told by "old timers" of the gay life in the village on Saturday nights and of the dances held in the single men's barracks where the rough bunks were hidden by sheets borrowed from the married men's quarters. Music was supplied by Jack Taylor on his accordion.

A store was built to serve the village and it was let to a Mr. Gee and later Mr. Jerry McCarthy.

The "Cookhouse" was kept by Mrs. Copeland and later by Mrs. Poole. Just inside the present gates there stood a small Anglican church known as St. Peters. This was afterwards moved to Birkdale Road where it is still in use today.

A reading room was established in the village, and for some years a little private school functioned, one of the teachers being Mrs. J. Clow.

THE COMPANY felt that by giving their employees comfortable housing they would be more likely to attract a better class of workmen. Some of the employees preferred to live in Auckland

and went to-and-fro by ferry. A comfortable villa-type house was erected on the hill for Mr. Muir, the first Works Manager.

The refinery was completed within 18 months, and commenced operations in September, 1884.

A progress report which appeared in "The Herald" on 6th February, 1884 — "Great progress is being made in the erection of the Sugar Refinery. A good deal of the machinery which arrived recently is now in position. The boilers, five in number are set and some idea can now be formed of the area the work still occupies. A large amount of the external brick wall of the main building has been erected, but work has been suspended on this part pending the erection of machinery. The workmen's cottages are comfortable and well built and from the number which are now up, quite a street has been formed between them."

For some years its weekly production of refined sugar was less than 150 tons, compared to its present output of an average 2,300 tons per week or about 120,000 tons a year.

Mention of the boilers was first made in November, 1883, when three of them arrived on the vessel called the "Triumph". They must have been unusually large for it took three days to unload them and they were delivered to the works by barge.

The first cargo of raw sugar (166 tons) arrived from Java on the "Stanley" on April 17, 1884.

The North Shore was sparsely settled in the 1880's, and even Auckland itself had a population of only 57,000, but there is no doubt that the establishment of the sugar refinery accelerated the settlement of the western part of the North Shore.

September 1, 1884, is an important date for it was then that the Chelsea refinery first began operations, which have not ceased since.

As soon as the main buildings were finished, a



start was made on permanent housing for the management staff and employees.

Two-storeyed brick houses were built — and still stand today — on the site of the original village. Some of the wooden cottages from the original village were moved to Mokoia Road and are still in an excellent state of preservation.

It is interesting to consider the magnitude and the laborious nature of the work that went into the building of Chelsea. All earth work was at first removed by pick and shovel and hand pushed in rail trucks. When sufficient excavation had been done, drays and horse teams were brought in.

HORSES PLAYED a big part in the all round cartage and hauling jobs at Chelsea. Before 1958 all sugar at Chelsea was handled in bags and drawn from shipside to bulk store by horse teams. It is said that the horses became so accustomed to their work they only needed to be harnessed and unharnessed.

Seddon Road, then as now, was an important link between Birkenhead and the refinery. It was a steep, winding track in the early days and in the winter mud made it almost impassable.

As heavy loads were carted up and down this route, stakes of ti-tree were cut from the sheltered gullies, tied together in bundles — then placed closely, side by side, across the track and covered with fine pipe clay. Only by adopting such methods could the road be used by the heavy horse traffic in the winter.

Over the years, the Chelsea work's whistle became very familiar to residents of Birkenhead and surrounding districts. Clocks were set by it.

In the earliest days, until about 1889, the first whistle blew at 5.30 a.m. This was a "Get-up - Get Ready" one. At 6 a.m. it blew again for the men to start work. There was a half an hour "break" at 7.30 a.m. when the men went to the cookhouse for breakfast. Starting work again at 8 a.m. the men worked right through till noon when they had one hour for lunch.

There was no morning or afternoon "smoko" in those days, and after the turn of the century, starting time was altered to 7.30 a.m. including Saturdays when, however, the men "knocked off" at noon.

Post war development at Chelsea has been extensive.

The dams are no longer used for bulk water supply and the reclamation of the second lowest dam began in 1964, when filling material was obtained from the hill between the office and the wharf. This has resulted in an additional four acres of flat land.

A new office block was built in 1949 and other new buildings since then include a boiler station in 1951 and a laboratory in 1960.

The greatest change was the installation of a bulk discharging and handling system. This has involved wharf reconstruction, the erection of a new 14,000 ton bulk store and the construction of a high volume conveyance system between wharf and store in 1958.

AFTER 70 year's use, the original brick chimney was shortened in 1955 and finally removed in 1962. The present chimney, 125 feet in height, was built in 1965.

Until 1961 it was a common sight to see the lighters being towed across the harbour from Chelsea to the city. There were seven lighters which carried up to 200 tons each, and 80,000 tons of sugar used to cross the harbour a year.

Five of the lighters were built at Chelsea, the Kotare and Omaki were built in 1941 and 1946 respectively.

At first it was thought that the lighter service, so efficient, would survive the harbour bridge, but this was not to be, for a change to motor truck transport was made in 1961.

Now the only ships which come to Chelsea are those which bring raw sugar from Fiji, Australia and other overseas suppliers.

IN 1820, Samuel Marsden came up this waterway in a Maori canoe en route to the Kaipara.

Here too, 20 years later, Governor Hobson with his Surveyor General, sailed up the channel in H.M.S. Herald when they were looking for a site on which to build Auckland. Incidentally, that is how Hobsonville got its name, and Herald Island, of course, was named after the ship.

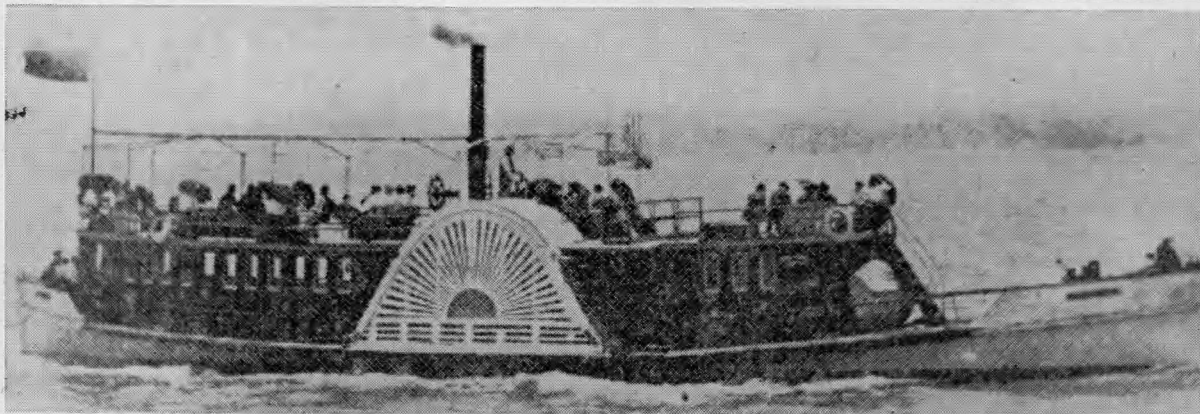
## HISTORICAL

Albertland settlers were probably the next people to sail past this historic headland on their way to Riverhead, thence overland to the Kaipara.

Perhaps even before the 1850s, this became a very busy waterway. A great number of logs were transported in rafts from Riverhead, Lucas and Hellyers Creek.

When the brick and pipe industry began, there

# THE FERRIES . . .



**F**OUR years after Governor Hobson selected a site for Auckland, the Crown Lands Department put up land for sale at Stokes' Point (Northcote). This was followed by other land sales at Takapuna, Devonport and Birkenhead where Crown Grants were issued as early as 1845.

Settlers on the North Shore who had a harbour frontage usually owned a boat and could provide their own harbour transport. However, those who lived further inland, either had to walk or ride a horse from their home to the waterfront — sometimes a day's journey in itself — where they were faced with the task of finding somebody who might take them across to Auckland.

By the early 1850's settlement "on the Shore" was going ahead quite steadily and the need for a regular service across the Waitemata became very evident.

Thus in 1853 Sir George Grey who was by then the Governor, decided the settlers needed some kind of ferry service.

So important did he consider this matter that he induced the newly-formed Provincial Council to vote a subsidy to any person who would be

The ferry Takapuna crossing the harbour one day about 1890. The passengers on the top deck carried umbrellas to protect themselves against the elements and the ashes. Even the captain stood out in the open.

prepared to undertake to provide such a service.

The Harbour Master, Captain Burgess, was then requested to make out a report on what he considered to be the best kind of service to run.

Captain Burgess in his reply to the Superintendent of Auckland Province stated that because communication and transport between different parts of the North Shore was very difficult he would recommend that there be three starting points on the Shore.

Captain Burgess suggested that Stokes' Point (Northcote) "admits of landing anytime, it would be a most suitable place."

His second suggestion was the creek to the right of the Roman Catholic College in Big Shoal Bay, about one mile to the north of today's toll plaza, known as Paddy Heath's Point. The third

## WATERWAY

were about 40 different works in the Whau and Henderson Creek areas at one time.

Cutters and scows loaded with coal for the kilns would go up on the tide and return with bricks and pipes, not only for Auckland, but other New Zealand ports as well.

In addition, passenger services operated from Auckland to various settlements up the harbour

inaccessible by road. It was easier to go by boat.

History of a different kind, however, was made in December, 1937, when Captain John Burgess landed the Centaurus flying boat between Chelsea and Kauri Point. It was the first trans-Tasman flying boat service from Great Britain to New Zealand via Sydney. After landing, Captain Burgess taxied from Chelsea to Mechanics Bay.



First North-  
cote wharf  
about 1890.

suggestion, was the Sandspit near Flagstaff Hill (Devonport).

Regarding the type of boats to be used in the proposed service, the Harbour Master recommended that the one for passengers: "should be a good four-oared whale boat suitable for any weather. For cattle, one similar to the cargo boats with a stern frame to let down, forming a platform to walk cattle in and out."

Finally, Captain Burgess suggested that the boats should run two days in the week from each point with the exception of Sunday.

Tenders were called early in 1854 but only one tender was received, that of Mr. John Reid of Northcote who asked for a subsidy of £37. 10. 0 per quarter year.

In his position as Harbour Master, Captain Burgess had the task of examining the boat which Mr. Reid intended to use. In his opinion, "Mr. Reid's boat is not exactly what is required, being rather small, but as no one else tendered, I am prepared to overlook this matter on condition that Mr. Reid finds another boat if the passenger trade increases — which is more than likely."

The Provincial Council acted promptly and so on February 1, 1854, a regular ferry service between the North Shore and Auckland began.

It is interesting to note that the one small whaleboat Reid provided could not carry out the schedule of trips laid down in the tender specifications:

From Stokes' Point where Mr. Reid lived, a service was arranged for Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday leaving Stokes' Point at 9 a.m. returning from Auckland at 3 p.m. The Shoal Bay service operated on the Tuesday and

the Sandspit (Devonport) on Friday. Passenger's luggage was limited strictly to a maximum of 200 lbs. per passenger. The fare was 6d per trip.

The first ferry boat was an open sailing-rowing boat carrying a crew of 2 men with seating for 20 passengers. The sailing equipment was similar to that seen on Navy cutters. The boats were smartly handled when wind conditions were favourable. The passengers often gave a hand with the oars in calm weather.

In the years that followed, the North Shore settlers yearned for steamer ferries but their requests were refused until, early in 1860, a small 40 ton, 20 h.p. paddle steamer named the "Emu" arrived on the Waitemata. Her owner, Captain Kreeft, had apparently read of the plight of the North Shore residents in a newspaper in Australia and decided he would come over and give them the kind of service they asked for.

He advertised in "The New Zealander" in the first week in March, that the "powerful iron steamer, Emu", would run excursion trips to the North Shore on March 10 and succeeding days. Trips were run to Stokes' Point (fare 1/-d single) and Devonport (1/6d).

The excursions were well patronised and the people of Northcote were overjoyed when the steaming time on one trip from wharf to wharf occupied only 10 minutes!

During the autumn of 1860 the little Emu ran many excursions and even came up harbour to Kauri Point, Herald Island and Pitoitōi (Riverhead), and down to Tamaki and Otahuhu.

It was hoped the Emu would eventually secure the contract for the North Shore service and on May 1, 1860, she made her initial run on the



First Birken-  
head wharf  
built 1882.



much talked of steamer ferry service to the North Shore.

The Provincial Government had now agreed to pay a subsidy of £500 a year on a contract calling for 2 trips daily to Stokes' Point with 2 trips to Devonport. Annual tickets were offered at £5. 5. 0 each.

All went well until October 20, 1860, when, unfortunately, the Emu was wrecked while picking up excursionists at Motutapu Island.

This was a bitter blow to the residents of the North Shore who now had to go back to the row boats. They appealed to the Superintendent of the Province for help; he met the situation by hiring open boats and called tenders for three sailing boat ferry services.

The accepted tender for Stokes' Point was John Reid again and he operated a daily two trip each way schedule. After his death his brother Jimmy continued to operate the service. A little competition crept in when William Bradney who lived at Duck Creek commenced a service up the harbour to Riverhead. Later he was joined by a partner and the firm was afterwards known as Bradney and Binns.

Some of the residents of Devonport got together eventually and formed the Waitemata Steam Ferry Company. It was a commendable effort in those times and resulted in the construction of a 70 ft. long, double-ended paddle steamer, with accommodation for 50 passengers, known as the "Waitemata". She was launched at Devonport in December, 1864, and commenced running an hourly service in March, 1865.

The open boats continued "to plug away" between Stokes' Point and Auckland into the early 1870's. The population was increasing all the time and some of the more vigorous citizens succeeded in persuading the steam ferry company, which now operated a service between Devonport and Auckland, to extend its service to Stokes' Point. Little vessels named "Devonport" and "Tongariro" were employed on the run but the trips were few and far between, with the result

that many of the residents still relied mainly on rowing boats for the crossing.

In 1882 the Northcote and Ponsonby Ferry Company was formed using paddle steamers in its fleet. The best known was the "City of Cork". In 1886 the steamer Birkenhead was built and operated between Stokes' Point and City.

About this time there were many conflicts over harbour towing work and several companies went into liquidation on account of it. Because the Northcote ferry company interested itself in towing work to the detriment of its passenger service, steps were taken to induce the Devonport company to extend its operations westward. This it finally did in January, 1892, and since then provided all ferry services to the western shores of the Waitemata until the opening of the Harbour Bridge in 1959.

The original Birkenhead wharf was east of the present wharf site and it was built in 1882.

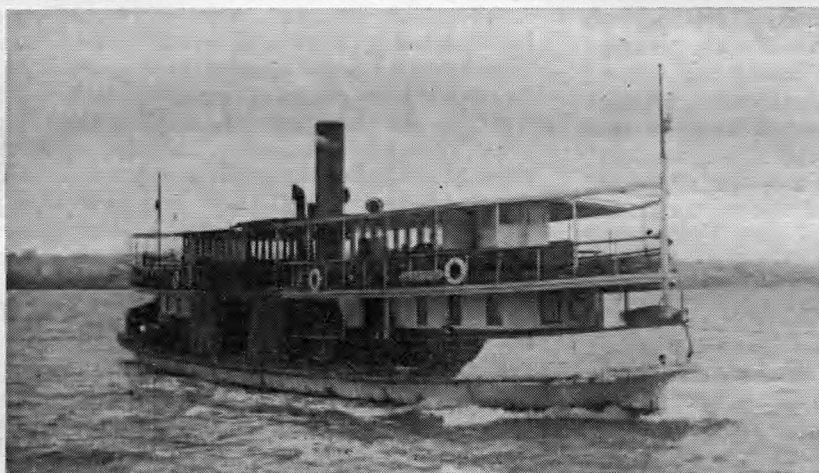
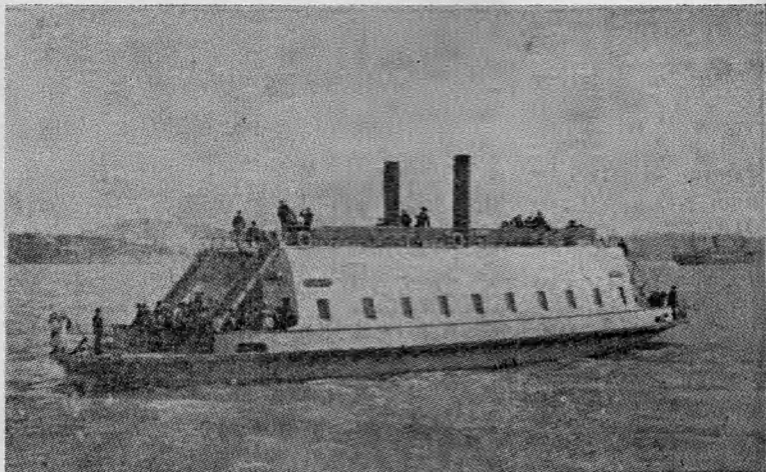
The first boats provided by the Devonport company on the Northcote-Birkenhead run were the "Osprey" and "Eagle". Both were steel paddle steamers which had been sent out to New Zealand in pieces and assembled at Devonport by a Mr. Quick. It is interesting to note that they were the first boats in Auckland to have electric light. They operated between Devonport and Auckland from 1882, and began the Birkenhead run ten years later. They remained on the run until 1920.

The pride of the ferry fleet was the "Albatross", built in Auckland in 1904 by Chas. Bailey. The designers won a competition of £100 offered by the Devonport Steam Ferry Company in 1900 for a propellor-driven, double-ended passenger vessel. She operated on the Devonport service until 1920 when she was transferred to the Birkenhead run in the same year.

Ferry skippers have said it was recognised that the Albatross had the finest lines of any boat in the fleet. She was also considered to be the easiest driven boat.

In the early 1950's, owing to poor quality coal, it was necessary on occasions to have a tug boat

The Condor, built to be the first vehicular ferry but never used as such. They called her the "Ugly Duck".



The Albatross.

The cargo ferry, Sparrowhawk.



to assist the Albatross at peak periods. She was converted to diesel engines in 1952.

The "Kestrel" was built in 1905 by Chas. Bailey but of much heavier construction and much broader in the beam than the Albatross. She served on the Devonport run until the early 1920's when she was transferred to the Birkenhead service. In 1951 she was converted to diesel engines and modernised.

Both the Albatross and Kestrel served the company well until becoming redundant with the opening of the Harbour Bridge on May 30, 1959.

Until the introduction of a vehicular ferry service about 1909, stock-drawn wagons could only be manœuvred on to the upper deck of the paddle steamers when it was level with the wharf — at half tide.

In 1903 the Devonport Ferry Company asked the Auckland Harbour Board to build special traffic landings. The Board agreed to do so, so the company ordered a boat to be designed on American lines for the transportation of both passengers and cargo. Thus came into being the "Condor".

Unfortunately, however, the Harbour Board

did not go ahead with their plans, so the Condor lay in a berth at the eastern end of Queens Wharf for two years.

Only on race days was she pressed into service and on such occasions she used a platform built in the bows to enable passenger traffic to be loaded at any state of the tide.

Finally the Auckland Harbour Board did away with their original plan for a vehicular landing to suit the Condor, and a pontoon type was recommended instead.

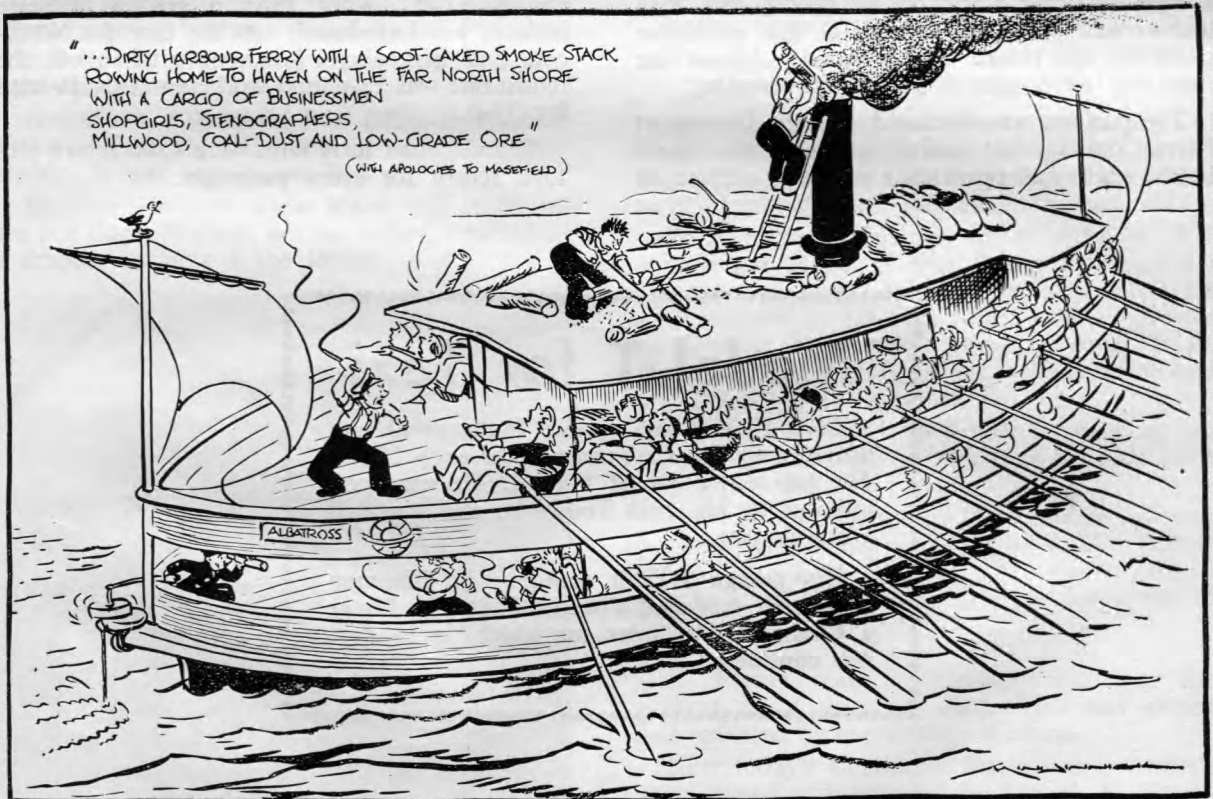
The upshot was that the Condor was converted into a passenger boat and was never used for the purpose for which she was intended.

The "Goshawk" was built in 1909, but, because of lack of patronage, was taken off the run for a year.

In 1911 the service was begun again and the Goshawk operated from Devonport to a landing approximately at the foot of Queen Street.

In 1912 the Harbour Board put a pontoon

A Minhinnick cartoon appearing during World War II when there was a coal shortage in Auckland.



MAKE 'EM ROW !



landing at the old Hobson Street extension which was approximately where the Hobson Wharf stands today.

In 1926 the Harbour Board built an electrically-operated vehicular landing at Mechanics Bay for the Devonport service and in 1927 built the same type of landing at Beaumont Street for the Birkenhead run.

Vehicular traffic had increased so much by this time, 1912, that the the Harbour Board built a pontoon landing at Birkenhead and the Ferry Company built the vehicular ferry "Sparrowhawk". This vessel was built specially for the Birkenhead-Auckland run and was fitted with a cabin so that it could carry both passengers and vehicles.

In 1913 the Auckland Harbour Board placed a pontoon landing at Northcote and the Sparrowhawk operated an hourly service between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.

This continued until 1936 when Mr. W. B. Darlow of Birkenhead, Chairman of the Auckland Harbour Board, paid attention to complaints of users of the service. They said that if they missed a boat at either Northcote or Birkenhead, they had to wait 40 to 60 minutes at that particular point for the return of the vessel, whereas the timetable advertised a 30 minute crossing.

The position was discussed with the Devonport Ferry Company but until it purchased the "Peat" boats, which had operated a vehicular service on

the Hawkesbury River in Australia, only the Goshawk and Sparrowhawk were used on the Birkenhead run.

It was not until 1945, after the Peats were put into the Devonport-Auckland service that the company was able to put bigger and faster vessels from the Devonport-Mechanics Bay run on the Birkenhead vehicular service.

These were the "Korea", a diesel vessel built in 1937 and capable of carrying 33 vehicles as against the Sparrowhawk's capacity of 18 vehicles; and the "Mollyhawk", built in 1923, a steam vessel capable of carrying 28 vehicles as against the Goshawk's 20 vehicles.

By doing this, traffic was encouraged to use the Birkenhead service and from 1950 onwards, the Goshawk was placed on this service at peak times as a third boat, giving three boats to Birkenhead and three boats to Devonport. On some peaks, the Korea, Mollyhawk, Goshawk and Sparrowhawk were all in use at the the same time on this service.

Until 1935 the passenger fare to Birkenhead was 9d return; 12-trip ticket 2/6d; and workers weekly 2/-d. After 1935 a gradual increase in fares was introduced. At the time the Northcote and Birkenhead boats were taken off, the return fare was 1/-d, and workers weekly 10-trips for 3/-d.

The vehicular ferry fares were 4/6d return plus 1/-d return for every passenger.

## Model T for Taxi

★ THE FIRST taxi service (unlicensed) was provided by Mr. C. Verran in the early 1920s. The taxi was a Model T Ford. He was soon followed by Mr. Jack Todd who also operated a taxi service. ★

His garage is still standing in Hinemoa Street. He first used a Model T Ford and later a Chalmers 6-cylinder car which, in its day, was considered luxury.

# Tradesmen . . .

THE construction of the first wharf in 1882 near where the Hinemoa Park jetty now stands, speeded up the settlement of the area for it meant more and easier communications with Auckland City and a greater ease of transport for produce.

Just up the wharf road from Hinemoa Park, stood the first general store in the district owned and operated by Mr. Tom Smith.

Behind the store were the livery stables and blacksmith's shops. One blacksmith was Mr. Ernie Horton and the other was a Mr. Clark. Across the road was a boarding house which is still standing.

By the mid 1880's in addition to Smith's Store, George Thompson opened a butcher's shop a little further up the hill.

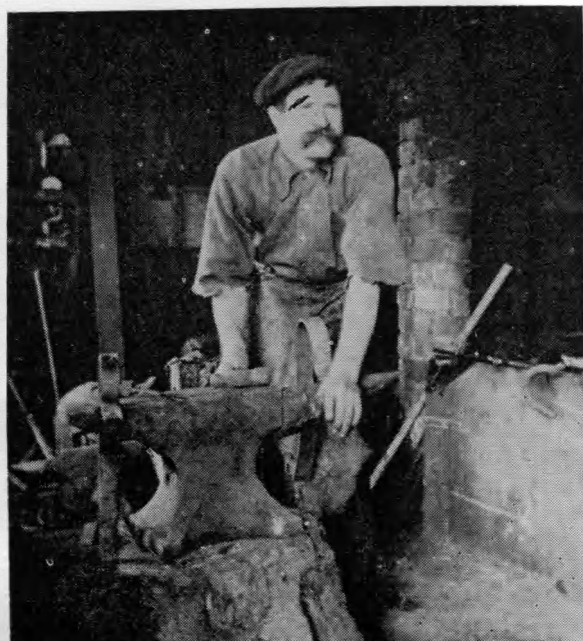
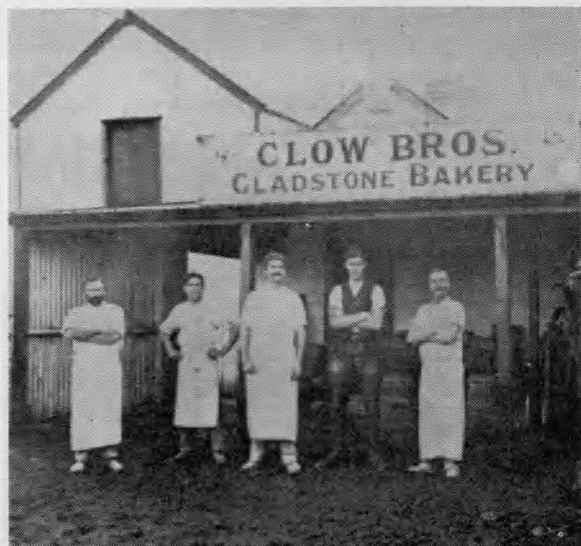
Clow's bakery was the next commercial venture and this stood on the corner of Marama Terrace and Hauraki Street.

Across the road, on the corner of Harbour View Road and Hauraki Street, was where Birkenhead's first chemist, a Mr. Elson, opened. The shop was later a drapery business owned by the Pearsons.

Nearby was the first ironmonger shop in Birkenhead operated by John Hadfields.

Just south of the main Post Office in Hauraki Street is where Steve Roberts' Grocery Store once stood. It was later burnt down.

Between Harbour View Road and Highbury the late Edgar Wallace, not the author, established a drapery business in the 1890's.



Ernie Horton, the blacksmith, above, sometime between 1905 and 1910, and below, Clow's bakery shop about 1890 on the corner of Marama (now Maritime) Terrace and Hinemoa Street.

At Rugby Road corner there was a bakery and shop as well as a butcher's shop and on the opposite corner there was a grocer's shop owned by Mr. William Lowe. This was in the early 1900s.

Hellabys began business in the area in 1907 and the late Mr. R. E. Stott Senior was made the manager. In 1920, however, he established his own business in Hauraki Street and it operates today under the control of one of his sons, Mr. A. Stott. Stott's butchery is the oldest established business in Birkenhead today.

Mr. R. O. White had a chemist shop in this locality for a number of years until his retirement in 1965.

Also in Hauraki Street there was a tailoring business owned and operated by a Mr. Robert Boyd. Next door to the tailor was a billiard saloon which was owned by Peter Alexander of Northcote.

THE FIRST shop at Highbury was near the present day Colourcraft shop. This was owned and operated by Mr. George Wallace.

Near today's Commerce Street was a draper's shop owned and operated by Mr. N. F. Havill. This was later burnt down.

Until the early 1920's the only other shop on the road to Birkdale was owned and operated by the Cooksons. The shop is still in use and was owned until 1967 by Mr. Gordon Mowat.

Wrightson's Bakery opened at Highbury in 1918 and continued until 1962. At the time it closed down it had the distinction of being in operation longer than any other business in the borough.

From the foregoing it will be seen that in the early days of the borough the business centre was in the vicinity of the wharf below Hinemoa Park.

In the middle 1920's, however, a Mr. Payne came from Palmerston North and established a boot repairing business in conjunction with a land agency at Highbury.

Mr. Payne established Highbury as a shopping centre for in 1927 he built three blocks of shops.

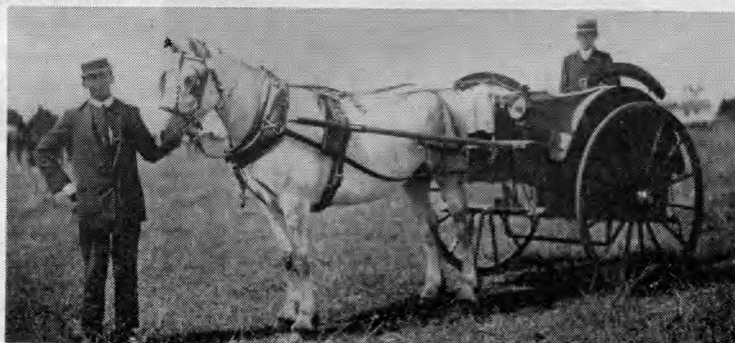
In one of the blocks, Stott's the butchers established themselves, in another, Mr. H. Burford began business as a barber, and in the third block, Mr. C. Neads had a stationery shop.



Mr. Alan Wilson of Ocean View Road sold fruit and vegetables from this cart, above, at the turn of the century. The mud was no better during the same period when Clow's delivered bread in this trap, left.

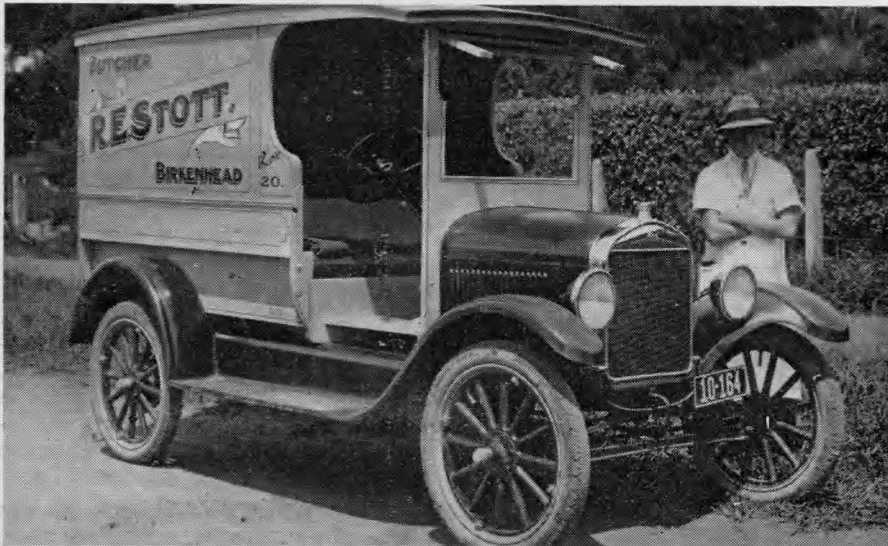


Newman's milk float soon after the turn of the century.





Stott and Sons butchers  
trap about 1920.



Stott's first motor  
delivery van. A model  
T Ford.

## MILK'O!

ALTHOUGH A number of the settlers in the middle of the last century had a house cow, there was a need for milkmen in the district.

As far as can be ascertained, a Mr. McCallum was one of the first, if not the first, to operate a horse-drawn milk float—this would have been in the Chelsea area.

One of the old - established Wilson family was also a milk vendor; also the late Stewart McPhail who served his customers well for a number of years.

In more recent years, in the 1920s Mr. Clay had a milk round, and to the amusement of his customers he used to put a big umbrella up over his milk float. A Mr. Aplin operated a milk round in the early 1930s.

It has been said that one of the milkmen in the early days had strong religious principles and on that account refused to deliver milk on the Sabbath, so his somewhat unfortunate customers often had to scald the milk on Saturday. There were no refrigerators in those days.

# Post Offices and People

AN indication of the growth of Birkenhead can be obtained from the history of the borough's postal arrangements.

The first post office, a non-permanent office which was operated by non-Post Office staff, was opened in a private house in the Birkenhead wharf area on February 15, 1884. Here, and later in a store across the road, a daily posting service operated until 1908 when on September 14 of that year a new and permanent office and residence was opened at 14 Hauraki Street — now Hinemoa Street — opposite Marama Terrace. The centre of community affairs had moved up the hill above the wharf.

Whereas a telephone cable had been brought across the harbour to Birkenhead in 1894 (the first call was put through on October 3 of that year) there was no Money Order Office or Post Office Savings Bank facilities until the Hauraki Street "Birkenhead Post Office" was opened in 1908.

When the move took place, the postmistress was Miss M. B. Hunter who remained in that position until she retired on July 1, 1924, and handed over to Mr. M. B. Menzies.

At the wharf she had been preceded by Mr. A. J. Choat, February to August 15, 1884; Mrs. M. A. Hobbs, to February 1, 1887; Mr. J. Hobbs, to July 1, 1891; Mr. M. Rountree, to October 1, 1891; Mr. T. Smith, to April 1, 1892; Mr. W. MacKenzie, to October 1, 1903; and Mr. C. P. Verran to July 10, 1905.

The borough's development continued to move westwards. At Highbury a small post office with full accountancy facilities was opened in 1935 in what is now Worsley's Fabrics, Mokoia Road. The name "Birkenhead Post Office", though, remained at the Hauraki Street premises for 80 years.

On November 6, 1964, when a new, large post office building and telephone exchange was opened in Mokoia Road, it was named "Birkenhead" and the older office was changed to "Birkenhead South".

The increase in the postal service was steady: 2,730 articles posted during 1897, 12,971 during 1907, and 150,000 during 1964.

Four post offices operate today with large staffs to look after the many services. Miss Hunter, in 1908, was assisted by a letter carrier and a telegraph messenger.

Despite the concentration of homes and business at the southern end of the borough in those early days, more and more people were settling further north and west at what is now Birkdale and Beach Haven. A non-permanent post office, in a private house, was operating at Hellyer's Creek in 1894. This first Birkdale post office, known as Hellyer's Creek Post Office, for its first month of existence, was operated by a Mr. Sydney Stewart Bowater and was situated near where "The Ranch House" now stands. Mr. Bowater was succeeded by Mr. William Newton who carried on until the end of 1902, when, because no one would take it on, the office was closed on December 31. This was a sorry thing for the people of that end of the borough for they were without nearby postal facilities for 23 years.

However, they did have a mail delivery service to Birkdale from the Birkenhead Post Office in Hauraki Street, and a local "telephone bureau".

THESE BUREAUX, and Birkdale had a succession of them, were operated from private houses and from them telephoned telegrams were delivered on foot or horseback. When the First World War broke out, in 1914, the telephone-bureau was in the house of Mr. William Levesque, Birkdale Road. It was his custom to place a large painted "T" on his gatepost so that passers-by would know there was a telegram to be delivered. Whoever took it on was paid 3d.

In September, 1925, Birkdale once again was given the services of a non-permanent post office. Mrs. M. E. Hilder, who had been operating the current telephone bureau, opened the post office in a shop that had been taken over by herself and her husband, Mr. W. J. Hilder, at the corner of what is now Beach Haven and Rangatira Roads but was then known as Kiwi and Puriri Roads. Mrs. Hilder became post mistress and telephonist. She was followed successively by Mrs. E. M. McMillan, May 17, 1947; Miss H. L. Hedges, February 21, 1949; Mr. R. T. B. Clark, September 1, 1952; and Mr. T. L. Bogue, July 23, 1955.

Soon after this even Birkdale began to develop growing pains and there was talk of a second post office to cater for the increasing number of people living nearer Verran's Corner. It took 10 years to happen. Meanwhile on August 20, 1956, Birkdale became a non-classified office and Mrs. F. Moffat was appointed postmistress. She was

followed by Mr. D. S. Giles on January 18, 1960, Mrs. P. M. Shotter on April 24, 1960, and Mrs. M. L. Powell on July 11, 1960.

Mrs. Powell remained postmistress when, in April 1965, the post office was re-named Beach Haven and a new Birkdale Post Office was opened near Verrans Corner, the position that holds today.

Birkenhead Borough, like so many other places after World War II, was suffering from an acute housing shortage. This went on until it was realised that there was good and cheap land, suitable for housing in Birkdale, and whether the impetus came from group builders who bought up land in the early 1950's, the fact remains that Birkenhead's progress became marked from then on.

When the much-dreamed of harbour bridge became a reality in 1959 the development of the borough shot ahead rapidly.

With the increase in population it became imperative that the roads and footpaths in the borough should be brought up to modern standards.

The population of Birkenhead in 1935 was estimated to be about 3,500 with about 1,200 ratepayers. At that time, the borough comprised 3,075 acres and maintained 25 miles of unsealed roads and 21 miles of footpaths.

Thirty-five years later the population numbers more than 14,500 with 4,700 ratepayers, 4,200 houses, and a rating revenue of \$390,000 a year.

Since 1955, roads programmes have cost the borough some \$2,250,000 in loan monies, subsidies and revenue, but by 1969 the last of the borough's main roads — Rangatira and Beach Haven roads — was tar sealed. This left very few carriageways in loose metal.

The whole of the borough, by 1969, was linked up with the North Shore Drainage Board's sewerage system and its treatment plant at Rosedale Road, Albany.

It is interesting to note that in 1936 it only needed a loan of £28,000 to provide nearly half the borough with sewerage. With today's high costs and taking into consideration the difficult contours of Birkdale, the amount spent on the western end of the borough only was in the vicinity of \$609,000.

The first Birkenhead Post Office opposite Marama (Maritime) Terrace. It is still operating today but has taken second place to the Highbury office.





# The Birkenhead Band . . .



The Birkenhead Municipal Brass Band of 1921. Back row: R. Kelly, C. Sampson, W. Hick, F. R. Goodall (Corporal), G. Atkins, G. H. Pike (Treasurer), V. Queenin, C. Patten (Librarian) and G. G. French. Middle row: C. Messenger, F. Newman, H. Bowker, E. R. French, A. Webb, G. French, G. A. Huddleston (Secretary), A. Davidson (Lance Corporal) and R. Atkinson. Sitting: E. P. Lanigan, G. Newman, P. C. Backhouse, H. C. Strong (Bandmaster), H. C. Patten (Sergeant) and O. Patten. Front row: M. J. Goodall and J. Llewellyn.

**T**HE Birkenhead Municipal Band was formed in 1917 under the conductorship of Mr. H. G. Strong. Messrs. R. Atkinson, G. Huddleston, E. P. Lanigan, A. Lumberg and H. Patten were founder bandsmen. It was the enthusiasm of the bandsmen and the patience of the conductor with learners, which brought about the formation of the band.

Mr. H. Patten, band-sergeant, used to teach many of the learners at his home of an evening.

The band practiced in the Victoria Hall every Thursday evening.

When the band was competent to "play out", it used to play at School Fairs, Church Bazaars, opening of the Northcote Bowling Club, the Albany Show and other functions in Birkenhead and Northcote.

By 1921 enough money had been raised to buy the band's first set of uniforms. The bandsmen's ambition was to play on silver instruments (only brass ones having been used since the band's formation) and steps were taken to achieve this.

The Borough Council was approached and found to be sympathetic — a donation was promised each year and a strong committee was formed including a borough councillor. Money raising schemes were organised and bazaars were held in Taylors Paddock (now the Shopping Centre at Highbury). The necessary funds were raised and in 1924 the band purchased silver instruments costing £1,250 and changed its name to the Birkenhead Borough Band.

Every Christmas morning the band would divide into two units and play carols in Northcote and

Birkenhead on trucks driven by Mr. L. Castleton of Birkenhead and Mr. W. Ward of Northcote. The two bands would start off at daybreak and finish at the Band Room around mid-day, a very happy and jolly group of men by then.

The band used to play for Picnics, visit the Hospitals and the Old Peoples Home. An Annual Concert, held in the Foresters Hall (with Auckland's best artists on the programme, was always booked out.

In 1925, under the supervision of Mr. E. Swindail, the bass-drummer and Mr. E. P. Lanigan the trombonist (bricklayers by trade) band members built the band rotundas at the Council Chambers and at Hinemoa Park.

The Birkenhead Band entered the band contest in 1925 held in the Auckland Domain and gained a place in the C. Grade. Mr. G. Smith took over the conductorship in 1926 followed by Mr. J. T. Lighton under whose conductorship the band made rapid strides musically. By this time uniforms were showing signs of wear so band

members began to raise funds by running bazaars and side shows at the Auckland Winter Show held in the Queens Wharf buildings. They succeeded in getting new uniforms in 1928.

The band gave recitals on the bandstands at Council Chambers, Hinemoa Park, Auckland Domain, Hilders Corner Beachhaven, Island Bay and over 1.Y.A. Broadcasting Station.

In 1931 it entered for the B. Grade Championships at Napier, but owing to the earthquake this was cancelled. The band then being at concert pitch it travelled to Rotorua at Easter, giving recitals on the bandstand in the Municipal Gardens.

During the Depression the band found it difficult to raise funds to carry on. It moved to a room under the Council Chambers for practice sessions but, unfortunately had to disband in 1933.

Instruments, uniforms and music were handed in to the Council and were eventually sold to the Fairlie Band in Canterbury.

— Mr. V. F. Queenin

## Kauri Point . . .

LIKE other vantage points on the North Shore, such as North Head and Mount Victoria at Devonport, an area at Kauri Point between Chelsea and Beach Haven, was originally reserved for defence purposes under the administration of Sir George Grey.

As time went on, however, the advent of long-range guns and other modern equipment of war made it unlikely such strategic points would again be required for defence purposes.

The Kauri Point area was therefore declared a domain and vested in the Auckland City Council, Birkenhead Borough Council and the Auckland Harbour Board. The adjoining property at Fitzpatrick's Bay was added. The area became a popular resort for camping parties during the summer months.

About 1929, with the consent of the public bodies concerned, the whole area consisting of 110 acres was vested in the Birkenhead Borough Council which operated as a Domain Board. It was then developed and improved as a summer resort and for recreational purposes.

### STAYED ON

Indeed it was not unusual for the mothers and children to stay on after the school holidays till the end of January or even till Easter while the breadwinner went to work from the camp.

Fitzpatrick's Bay and its environs was a canvas town. Soft drinks and stores were obtainable

from a house (now demolished) occupied by Mr. R. Rickwood. In addition, Mr. Rickwood acted as the camp caretaker. In short, the whole set-up was similar to a present-day motor camp without the cars and, of course, modern amenities and conveniences.

By 1935, the Navy was seeking a site for the Naval Armament Depot, at a distance from populated Devonport.

Thus, Commodore Fischer Burgess-Watson, looking for a suitable site, chose Kauri Point Reserve which had originally been a defence area.

This resulted in a 90-acre portion of the domain consisting of an area adjoining the Colonial Sugar Company's property and including the ridge and highest portion of the land, and the sheltered beach below, being taken back for defence purposes.

The establishment of a depot at Kauri Point was completed by the end of 1937, just two years before the Second World War was declared.

In 1942, a large area of Kauri Point was taken over by the Americans and many more powder magazines were quickly built. The Americans camped nearby where Pinewood Lane now is.

The Officer in Charge of the Depot during the war years was Lieutenant - Commander H. A. Haynes, O.B.E.

While battleships and cruisers, frigates and sloops were being refitted at the Devonport Naval Base, the ammunition was stored and inspected at Kauri Point.

# Reserves . . .

IT is fitting to quote an extract from a report of Lord Bledisloe's oration given at the Arbor Day Ceremony at Birkenhead in July, 1933.

Referring to "the far-sighted municipal administration" that had characterised the development of the North Shore boroughs, Lord Bledisloe said that in no respect had greater foresight and enlightenment been displayed than in the provision of recreation reserves, the most notable of which were that at Kauri Point Domain and Kauri Park.

"The latter," he said, "with its unique plantation of majestic kauri trees.

"I venture to hope that your reserves and parks will always be regarded among the most precious possessions of the borough, invaluable and irreplaceable assets which it will be deemed desecration to mutilate or destroy."

## NORTH SHORE SCENIC BOARD

A NOTICE appearing in the N.Z. Gazette on December 8, 1949 (No. 74) constituted the North Shore Scenic Board. The Board was to maintain and develop Le Roy's Bush and any other domains and reserves entrusted to it.

At the inaugural meeting, held in the Birkenhead Council Chambers on December 6, 1949, the following members of the board were appointed: E. J. Osborne—Mayor of Birkenhead, Chairman; A. G. Strahan, Hon. Secretary; and Messrs. B. King, Commissioner of Crown Lands; Coup and Hunter (Lands and Survey Dept.); F. M. Pearn, Mayor of Northcote; V. Evans, Principal of Northcote College; J. G. Hooton, Waitemata County Council; J. A. Hunter, Royal N.Z. Inst. of Horticulture; L. T. Hayman and R. Cooper.

At the inaugural meeting it was resolved to find out what funds would be available to the Board and North Shore local bodies were approached.

This resulted in an annual grant from each of the borough councils, the Waitemata County Council of £50 per annum which makes it possible for a part-time caretaker to be employed.

The personnel of the present Board includes not only local body representatives but people who are interested in forest preservation.

The following constituted the Board of 1969:—Messrs. W. J. Hilder, Chairman; D. J. Mitchell (Assist. Commissioner of Crown Lands); D. R. Gillies (representing Waitemata County and East Coast Bays); S. L. Corbett (representing Devonport and Takapuna); N. J. Kitchen; L. Wooloxall;

F. C. Rickman (representing Birkenhead and Northcote); S. W. Hunter; Mrs. M. Fisher and Mr. P. Kortegast, Hon. Secretary.

The Boroughs of Birkenhead and Northcote are indeed fortunate in having remnants of bush, the intrinsic value of which will grow with the years.

The following Reserves come under the administration of the Board: -

## KAURI GLEN

AN AREA of 24 acres of mixed bush and imposing stands of kauri situated behind Northcote College and extending to Tui Glen. Bought by the Crown in 1906 it was vested in the Northcote Borough Council until the formation of the Board.

The paths are well formed and bridged in this Reserve and it provides foot access from Kauri Glen Road to Tui Glen and Pupuke Roads.

## KAURI PARK

APPROXIMATELY 20 acres which contains excellent kauris some of which are estimated to be 300 years old at least. An interesting feature about Kauri Park is the fact that kauris more or less "rub shoulders" with the native beech — a tree which is very rare in the Auckland district. Kauri Park is only a few hundred yards from Verrans Corner, the entrance is on Victoria Road West. Provision is made for "off street" parking. The official opening of new gates took place on Saturday, March 6, 1965. At the same time the James Prickett Memorial seat was dedicated. Mr. Prickett, a former borough councillor, had done much to preserve and develop the borough's bush reserves.

This reserve has well-formed tracks and many of the trees, like those in the other reserves, have nameplates screwed on them.

## LE ROY'S BUSH

SITUATED IN lower Birkenhead between Hauraki Street and Onewa Road, this fine 14-acre block of bush was bought by the Crown in 1949 with the help of donations from local borough councils, interested organisations and private people.

As well as young kauris, this reserve contains some interesting plants probably planted under the direction of Mr. le Roy, the former owner of the property.

There is foot access from the Onewa Road entrance through to Carlton Terrace, and a fine bridge has been constructed over a waterfall. Much drainage work has yet to be done.



### **ESKDALE ROAD RESERVE**

SITUATED behind the Glenfield Cemetery, and extending up the hill towards Glenfield County Town its entrance is on Eskdale Road. This 9-acre reserve came under the Board's administration in March, 1962.

There are no forest giants, these having been milled years ago, but there is good regeneration of a variety of species. There are no properly formed tracks.

### **HINEMOA PARK**

THIS IS to be found at the Birkenhead wharf and is a popular picnic ground. It was made partly by a big slip from the nearby cliff and partly from filling from borough road construction. The foreshore portion is reclamation by the Harbour Board and is leased to the Council. It was put in grass in 1924.

Many of the improvements, such as tree planting was done by the Hinemoa Park Beautifying Society, two members of which, Mr. Frank Finch and Mr. Taylor, drew the plans. Other members have helped over the years with labour and material.

There have been several big slips in this area and in the depression years of the early 1930s, the park was reformed and planted out in trees and ferns by relief workers. Mr. James Prickett and the then borough foreman, Charlie Bridge, were the planners.

### **THE CIVIC RESERVE Highbury**

THIS houses the Council Chambers, the Plunket rooms and the public library and the Soldiers War Memorial. It is well laid out with lawns and shrubs and was designed by Mr. Frank Finch.

### **LITTLE SHOAL BAY RESERVE**

THIS is at the lower end of Marama Terrace and was first suggested as a playing field in 1906. At that time the tide went up as far as Valley Road.

The then Council had talks with the Harbour Board and the Northcote Borough Council as it was to be a joint reclamation and development project, but little progress was made. It was not until some years later that the Harbour Board put in a floodgate.

The matter of developing Little Shoal Bay was again reviewed in the depression years of the early 1930s but nothing eventuated.

Now, in 1968, the Birkenhead and Northcote Borough Councils are busy draining and reclaiming. A road across the bay from Marama Terrace to Northcote is almost complete and the development of the Northcote portion of the reclaimed area is going ahead.

### **FITZPATRICKS BAY RESERVE**

IN 1916, the Harbour Board notified the Council that it had transferred an area of 48 acres at the foot of Balmain Road to the Crown for recreation purposes.

The Borough Council was appointed as a Domain Board and is now engaged in making it a modern beach resort. As such, it is believed, it has a wonderful potential.

### **THE BIRKENHEAD DOMAIN**

THIS IS on the western side of Glenfield Road between Eskdale and Domain Roads and consists of an area of over 100 acres. At one time it was being considered as being a suitable site for a golf course. It has been a reserve since 1881 but has been made little use of over the years.

### **OSBORNE PARK**

SITUATED at Verrans Corner, this park was formed by relief workers in the depression years. It was bought for a reservoir site and has been in turn the public pound, the Council rubbish tip and is now a sports area.

### **SHEPHERDS PARK**

THIS is the latest sports area of 17 acres. It is situated near Hellyers Creek at the lower end of Tramway Road and Kowhai Avenue. It was proposed to buy this from Mr. George Wood in 1928 but the proposal was turned down. Later, it was taken under the Public Works Act from the then owner, a Mr. Bryant.

### **TUI PARK, BEACH HAVEN**

IN April of 1920, a Mr. Witherford, part-owner of the Beach Haven estate offered to give the Council 4½ acres near the beach, on condition the Council would take over the land in its "wild" state and dedicate two roads on the estate.

The Council accepted the offer. The two roads were Pohutukawa and Kowhai Avenues.

### **HILDER PARK, BEACH HAVEN WHARF**

NAMED after Mr. W. J. Hilder, a previous Parks Committee chairman, who had planned and worked on it.

This is a beach reserve of half an acre. It was a wilderness of pine trees and Mr. Hilder landscaped and planted it out with suitable coastal shrubs. It is a pleasant, safe, swimming spot with good bathing facilities. Beautiful views of the sea with Hobsonville forming an attractive background are obtained from this area.

### **THE WAR MEMORIAL PARK**

THIS was bought soon after World War II ended. It has two entrances, one from Wairoa Avenue and the other from Glenfield Road.

# SERVICES . . .

## Water

LIKE most other public services on the North Shore, Birkenhead's water supply has had its share of setbacks and troubles, even to the extent of precipitating bitterness between Birkenhead and Devonport, resignations within the Birkenhead Borough Council, and finally a decision to hand over the responsibility for supplying water to the Auckland City Council.

Chelsea Sugar Refinery has always needed a big water supply and to be sure of it, the company bought several hundred acres of land between Seddon and Balmain Roads, built dams, and used the catchment area to feed a series of reservoirs.

The company's employees living in or near Chelsea village were fortunate in drawing from that supply.

All other Birkenhead residents at the turn of the century depended on rainwater tanks or a creek if one was handy. Quite a few used the creek and its banks behind the Memorial Park, both for a washing and drying ground.

The Council soon became concerned about a public supply. In the minutes of a meeting in February, 1899, is this statement: "At a meeting in the Council Chambers last night, a large number of residents from both Northcote and Birkenhead were present to protest against a proposal by Devonport to secure the exclusive right to lay water pipes on the county roads which surrounded the Lake in the Takapuna Riding."

If they had this right, Takapuna, Northcote and Birkenhead would have to buy their water from Devonport, the protesters said.

The following resolution was passed: "That this Council protests against the unfairness which the resolution passed by Devonport embodies and feels sure that the County Council will take care that justice is done for all districts surrounding the lake."

### RESERVOIR MOOTED

The next step was taken in December, 1901, when a joint committee suggested a scheme be-

tween Northcote and Birkenhead whereby a reservoir could be erected in Ocean View Road or opposite the Glenfield Cemetery. Eventually this scheme was abandoned.

In 1906 came the next move: The Council, on the recommendation of the water committee, bought all that piece of land at Verrans Corner between Kauri and Victoria Road West as a reservoir site. The price was £140.

It contained nearly 10 acres. A part of it was later used as a public pound, another part was the local rubbish tip, and the rest is now Osborne Park.

The next suggestion was that the services of a water diviner be secured.

On July 28, 1910, councillors John G. Kay and Wm. Wallace reported that the Reverend Mason, the water diviner, had visited the district and had located two likely spots on the proposed reservoir site.

Tenders were called for boring, but the flow was not big enough to warrant any further action.

In June, 1911, steps were taken to raise a water loan of £25,000 to bring water from Lake Pupuke to Verrans Corner.

The Council's consulting engineer said that he would not recommend using the site which had been bought for a reservoir and advised Mr. John Kay, who had since been elected Mayor, to buy a piece of land from the Bagot family on the eastern side of Waipa Street.

### IT WAS URGENT

This he did on his own account as the matter was urgent and he informed the Council that he had bought two acres between Waipa Street and Victoria Road East, including the buildings thereon. The price was £850, terms £100 down and the balance in five years.

The Council approved his action, but not without dissent, two councillors resigning to show their disapproval.

A site was acquired at the lake for a pumping station and tenders called for the various works required. At the Council meeting in January, 1912, these tenders were accepted:

Mays and Gorden, laying pipes from the Lake and erecting	
500,000 gal. reservoir	- - £9,000 6 9
Parker and Company, pipes	- £9,000 17 4
John Chambers, erecting plant and machinery	- - - - £1,933 0 0

The reservoir at Verran's Corner, still used to top up the system when pressure on the high levels is low.



Events then moved fast. In May, 1912, the Council approved of a Crown Lands Department suggestion that the lake be invested in the local bodies, with equal voting power.

Mr. G. W. Rae was appointed pumping engineer from 52 applicants.

The contractors were finished on time and the water supply was formally turned on on April 26, 1913.

It was a great occasion in the borough.

The pumping station was inspected at 1 p.m.

The ceremony of turning on the water at Verran's Corner was at 3 p.m., followed by afternoon tea for everyone at the Foresters Hall at 4 p.m.

By July, 1913, there were 94 water consumers.

In September, 1915, the Water Supply Board of Control said the water in the lake was not enough for all users and steps should be taken to augment the supply. Over the years, various schemes were put forward, namely: turning the lower Wairau Creek into the lake and getting a supply from a river behind Riverhead; using Lignite Creek at the head of Hellyers Creek; and, as a last resort, but with no results, putting down a bore near the present reservoir.

### **PUPUKE SMELL**

No action was taken and the lake got lower

and lower, then developed a fishy smell until the water was unpleasant to use.

In near desperation in the early thirties, Birkenhead made an approach to the Auckland City Council for an independent supply.

After much discussion, the City Council decided to lay a six-inch main from Westmere across the reef to Shark Bay at Kauri Point and then along Balmain Road and up Waipa Street to the Birkenhead reservoir.

That supply existed from 1934 till 1944 when the City Council built a million-gallon reservoir at Verran's Corner, laid a special main from the Waitakere dam to Hobsonville, then under the water to Fowlers Bay and via Rangatira Road to Verran's Corner.

This supply became a part of the whole North Shore reticulation until the Harbour Bridge was built, when a 21-inch main with provision for a second main, was laid across the bridge.

Now Birkenhead, in common with all other North Shore water users, receives its supply from Auckland City's Symonds Street reservoir. Lake Pupuke, which was the original source of supply, is at present used for fishing and boating, but should an emergency arise, water could again be obtained from there.



# Schools

Birkenhead side school  
about 1915.



**I**N the early days of the North Shore, after the lands of the Waitemata had passed into the hands of the Crown (1841), there were none of today's borough boundaries.

Northcote, or Stokes' Point, as it was then known, became an important link between the growing city of Auckland and the northern areas. There was a hostelry at Stokes' Point at which travellers from the Wade and surrounding districts rested and left their horses before crossing over to Auckland.

Apart from a little private school in the Takapuna district, the only education available for the children of the few scattered families in the Stokes' Point area was provided by private tutors in private houses.

This state of affairs went on until January, 1873, when the residents of Stokes' Point drew up a petition urging the Auckland Education Board to constitute a school district in their area, in which there were 39 children.

The board decided to constitute a school district embracing all the Northcote area as far north as Hellyers Creek (Birkdale) and taking in the Lake Pupuke area west of the Devonport Highway district. It would be worked half-time with the little private school known as Menary's.

In spite of strong protests from the residents of Stokes' Point, who wanted a full-time school and amended boundaries, the board decided to adhere to its decision to include both the Stokes' Point and Lake areas in one school district — this district to be known as the Shoal Bay School district.

The first meeting of householders was held on May 8, 1873, and the following committee was elected: Messrs. Michael Shea (Chairman), Patrick Heath, Benjamin Menary, James Wallace and James Sheriff (Secretary).

## **ORIGIN OF COLLEGE**

Considerable difficulty was experienced by the committee in finding suitable accommodation for a school but eventually they were successful in

arranging for the use of an unoccupied vicarage at Stokes' Point. Towards the end of 1873, with a roll of 6 pupils, the school began under the half-time arrangements.

In 1876, the householders made representations to the board to have the two schools converted into full-time schools. The board agreed and the district was divided into two districts: Stokes' Point School district and the Lake School district, the change taking effect from the beginning of 1877. Thus began what is now known as Northcote College.

Northcote College is a school with a unique background. Normally, as the needs of a district expand, new demands are met by the establishment of new schools of different types. In the case of Northcote College, however, expanding needs have been met by the steady development of the one school into different forms, marked by slightly differing names.

In June, 1878, the site was chosen on which the College stands today. It is interesting to note that an acre of ground was donated by a Mr. Aitken and a further acre purchased from him by the board at a cost of £20. The first building comprised one large room with two porches and the headmaster was Samuel F. Mayhew.

In 1880 the name of the school was changed from Stokes' Point to Northcote.

## **MOUNTING ROLL**

When reading the history of Northcote College from its beginning, one point is most apparent — the roll always seemed to be in excess of the accommodation and the various school committees over the years were always urging the board to provide more accommodation.

The playing area was also very restricted. By 1917, the situation had become desperate — the roll had passed the 550 mark. Two rooms, each built to accommodate 85 pupils were now occupied in one case by 150 and in the other by 112.

Slowly the board took action by building primary schools at Northcote (the present Northcote Primary on the corner of Lake and Onewa Roads) and Birkenhead — thus the strain was eased on Northcote, but not for long.

Immediately after the erection of the new primary schools, work was begun on converting the infants' building on the original Northcote site into Manual Training classrooms. This was done in 1919.

Northcote district school was elevated to Junior High School at the beginning of 1925 and catered for pupils of Standards 5 and 6 of the contributing schools, namely Northcote, Birkenhead, Birkdale, Glenfield and Albany. The roll at the commencement of the year stood at 243.

In June, 1930, representations were made by the School Committee regarding the provision of facilities for secondary education at Northcote. The board considered the position would be met by the establishment of a district high school, and applied to the Department for authority to establish such a school. This was approved from the beginning of 1931, the school became Northcote District High School.

The early 1930's were the depression years and it is not surprising to find that the board refused the school committee's request for the replacement of the old building.

In 1936, further representations were made by the committee for the replacement of the old building and again it was declined. Then fate stepped in, for shortly after, the temporary building used to house the secondary department went up in flames.

Perhaps readers will be able to appreciate more fully the present day Northcote College by reading an extract from an article written by Mr. F. A. Garry in 1936.

Mr. Garry had applied for the headmastership and went to view the building:—

"It was Saturday morning and a despondent caretaker was the only person in sight. He led me around. The Intermediate department consisted of six rooms mainly facing south. Ceilings were high and floors low, so low indeed, that some were below ground level. Doors refused to close because blocks had rotted below and floorboards sagged. The Head's study was a cubbyhole down the end of a low corridor. Apparatus within the building was nil. Every inch of floor space was thickly covered with desks.

### REPAIRS NEEDED

"We then looked at the Manual department which had been an Infants' department in the

original school. It had two divisions — a wood-work room and a cookery room — their crudity I need not dwell upon.

"Finally, we looked at the 'High School' department. This consisted of two rooms and we mounted rickety steps to enter. The structure was sheathed entirely in corrugated iron, unheated and unadorned." (This was the part that was later destroyed by fire.)

Mr. Garry mentions that after seeing all this, he decided to withdraw his application.

Some months later, the position was re-advertised and this time the prospects looked much better. The Primary department was to be made into a separate school. The destroyed High School buildings were to be replaced by a modern block, and the Manual Training Block was to be improved also; again Mr. Garry applied and this time accepted the appointment.

The Secondary School roll in 1936 was about 100. Ten years later it was 300. The growth of the school clearly called for new status and, at the beginning of 1947, Northcote College became a full post-primary school.

Much had been achieved in the ten years immediately preceeding post-primary status. However, there was still much more to do. Many more frustrations were to be experienced before Northcote College caught up to what is now accepted as a modern post-primary school.

### BIRKDALE SCHOOL

In 1892, seventeen parents with 49 children in the Hellyers Creek area asked for a school but Northcote and Mayfield (now Glenfield) School Committees said there were not enough children and the application failed.

The following year there were 20 children in the district receiving no education.

The Loan and Mortgage Company offered to give 21 acres for a school site and residents volunteered to clear, plough and fence it.

The Education Board accepted the offers and the land transferred ownership in 1894. The first school building consisted of one room and a porch and it cost £190 — it was opened on October 1, 1894, with Miss Rosanna Bowen the first teacher, and 32 pupils.

**It is interesting to note that there were night classes held for adults, some of whom could hardly read or write.**

The first School Committee was elected in 1895 and that same year it was obvious that accommodation was inadequate, so an addition was added — this provided for another 56 pupils.

In 1897, a house of five rooms was brought by

scow from Matakana and placed on the site of the Birkdale School. This house was the residence of the school's first headmaster, Mr. Julian Brook, and it remained on the property until about 1953.

In 1906, it is recorded, there was a transition from slates to writing paper.

The school was added to in 1903, 1911 and 1939. In 1954, a prefabricated building was added and a swimming pool was opened in 1954.

The higher standards were abolished about 1925 when the Northcote Junior High School opened. There have been nine headmasters and by 1967 the staff comprised 10 teachers and a headmaster. The roll, in that year had increased to 330.

#### **BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL**

When the first block was built in 1915 it was officially a side school of Northcote. The roll was too big for the accommodation and classes were held in the Foresters Hall and later in the Methodist Sunday School Hall.

This situation went on until April 15, 1925, when another block of classrooms was built and Birkenhead was transferred from Northcote and started with a roll of 275 children.

Several new classroom blocks have been added over the years as well as prefabs to accommodate the increasing intake since the 1950s.

The 1967 staff consisted of 18 teachers and the headmaster. The roll is 649 pupils.

#### **BEACH HAVEN SCHOOL**

Situated in Tramway Road, this school was opened in February, 1960 with a headmaster (Mr. R C. Winn) and a staff of 4 teachers and a roll of 123. By 1966, the staff had increased to 16 and a headmaster, and the roll totalled 611.

#### **BIRKDALE NORTH SCHOOL**

Situated in Birkdale Road, it was opened on February 1, 1965. The staff was a headmaster (Mr. Barris) and four teachers. The roll was 130.

By 1966, Mr. Barris' staff doubled and the roll was 280.

#### **VERRANS ROAD SCHOOL**

Situated at the bottom of the road which, until recently, was called Victoria Road East.

When the school opened on February 3, 1964, it was called Birkenhead West. Since the beginning of 1966 however, it has been Verrans Road School. The first headmaster had a staff of four and an opening roll of 117. By 1966, the staff consisted of seven and a roll of 202.

#### **BIRKDALE INTERMEDIATE**

Situated in Birkdale Road on a property which had belonged to the Beere family since 1892 the school was opened in February 1965 with a head-

master, a staff of 15 and a roll of 380. By 1966, the staff was 16 with a roll of 401.

#### **ST. MARY'S CONVENT, NORTHCOTE**

This school was opened in 1933 with a roll of some 80 pupils and three classrooms. Two more rooms were added in 1953, when the roll had risen to 200 and, in 1964, a further five classrooms were added. By then 400 pupils were being educated up to Form II level.

Staffing of the school has been by the Dominican Nuns from Dunedin.

#### **ST. DOMINICS COLLEGE, NORTHCOTE**

Opened in 1953 with a roll of 60 pupils, this girls' college has catered for academic and commercial secondary education and is conducted by the Sisters of St. Dominic.

Major extensions of classrooms, science laboratories and dormitory have been added to the College and the roll in 1967 had increased to 150.

The pupils have regularly assisted with all community projects and collections in the Boroughs of Birkenhead and Northcote. Excellent results have always been achieved in vocal, speech and choral items at the North Shore Annual Competitions.

#### **BIRKENHEAD KINDERGARTEN**

On October 14, 1940, a preliminary meeting attended by 22 mothers and with the Mayoress, Mrs. E. J. Osborne, presiding, was held to consider the establishment of a kindergarten at Birkenhead. The meeting was addressed by Miss S. Newman, Auckland Kindergarten Association, who explained the purpose of a kindergarten, and the necessary organisation and financial responsibility entailed.

It was unanimously resolved to establish a kindergarten, and all agreed to support this project. One week later a further meeting was held and the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. W. B. Darlow; secretary, Mrs. E. Furness; treasurer, Mrs E. Creagh; committee: Mesdames A. Young, B. Gill, T. Mooney, F. Frith, N. Campbell and E. Chambers.

Funds were raised by various means including fairs, dances, bring-and-buys, and bridge afternoons, and the first kindergarten class began on June 24, 1941, in the Buffalo Hall, Mokoia Road. Miss E. Pearce was appointed the Kindergarten's first Director.

Since then an active Mothers' Committee and many generous and public-spirited people have raised funds to meet the normal running costs of the kindergarten. Special mention should be made of that tireless worker, Mrs. S. C. Martin.



# Churches

Methodist Church old  
folks reunion at the  
turn of the century.



**J**UST over 110 years ago the first Anglican Vicar of Devonport was appointed and his "parish" embraced all the North Shore and extended as far as Warkworth.

The first Anglican service in the Birkenhead area was held under a shop verandah over 80 years ago at Chelsea Village.

It is recorded that on January 20, 1884, the Rev. F. G. Evans began a Sunday School at Chelsea Village and Mr. F. W. Hammond was the first Superintendent.

Church services were conducted regularly at Chelsea Village during 1884 and the first baptism took place on May 18, 1884.

Early in 1885, a meeting was held to make plans for building a mission hall at Chelsea and on June 28, 1885, St. Peter's Mission Hall was opened by Bishop Cowie in the presence of 80 people.

When the need no longer existed for the church room at Chelsea, it was moved to its present site in Birkdale Road and re-dedicated in 1907.

Since Northcote parish was established in 1860, when Bishop Selwyn consecrated the St. John the Baptist Church, it is not surprising therefore, to find that Birkenhead was originally worked as part of the Northcote parish.

In 1908, services commenced in what was known as the Foresters Hall at Highbury. The first service was taken by Mr. Horace Hunt of Northcote. The congregation consisted of half a dozen people. Lay Readers at this time were Messrs. W. Havill, A. Angus and Draffin.

These services continued until, at a meeting held on September 1, 1910, it was resolved "that the time had arrived when the Church of England should take the step forward of purchasing a suitable site for the subsequent erection of a church".

This became a reality on January 1, 1911, when the hall which hitherto belonged to the Foresters' became the property of the church and was dedicated by Archdeacon Calder on June 20, 1913.

Mr. Havill, who has been associated with the church ever since he settled in Birkenhead in 1908 recalls the numerous times he took an evening service at St. Peters, Birkdale. In those days the last gas lamp was on the corner of Waipa Street and Balmain Road, and it was a case of walking from his home (which was then in Roseberry Avenue) with a storm lantern in one hand and a suitcase containing his vestments in the other.

Holy Communion was celebrated for the first time at All Saints on August 20, 1913.

Services continued in the church on its site at Highbury until 1923 when the building was moved lower down Hauraki Street and re-erected on its present site where it was re-dedicated by Archbishop Averil on Sunday, July 15, 1923.

The following year is one of great importance for it was then that Birkenhead became a separate parish under the care of the Rev. H. Bedford.

The subsequent years have seen many changes in the parish which has extended quite beyond the capability of a single vicar.

On March 25, 1956, the foundation stone was laid for St. Michael and All Angels' Church at Greenhithe, and until recently the Birkenhead vicar had to conduct services there as well as at Beach Haven, St. Peter's, Birkdale, and All Saints.

Before St. Nicholas Church Hall was opened in 1964, residents of Beach Haven used to meet at the home of Mrs. Buer of 93 Puriri Road, and later on at the Beach Haven Ratepayers' Hall.

The parish boundaries today are approximately the same as those of the Birkenhead Borough.

The following have been vicar:—

1924-1928 Rev. H. Bedford

1929-1940 Rev. P. C. Davis

1941-1945 Rev. Melville Harcourt (now a canon of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York).

1945-1947 Rev. Mortimer Jones

1948-1950 Rev. Peter Garrity

1950-1959 Rev. Ernest Hulme

1959-1964 Rev. J. W. Harriman

1964- Rev. B. T. Jenkins

The Mothers' Union Banner was given by the Mothers' Union of the Parish of Lydney, Gloucestershire, home parish of Lord Bledisloe, former Governor-General of New Zealand. The banner was made as an act of appreciation for food parcels sent by All Saints Mothers' Union during the war.

### ST. MARY'S, NORTHCOTE

Although St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church is in Onewa Road, Northcote — just outside the boundary of Birkenhead Borough — the Parish embraces Northcote, Birkenhead, Glenfield and extends to Albany and Paremoremo.

For many years Birkenhead, Northcote and the outlying areas were, like the rest of the North Shore, under the care of the parish priest of Devonport. Old residents and parishioners remember the venerable pastor of that parish, the late Father M. J. Furlong, some 60 years ago, driving over to Birkenhead and Northcote in a four-wheeled buggy on his monthly visits to celebrate Mass and administer to his flock.

In 1920, when the new parish of Takapuna was formed and its territory included all the western districts of the North Shore, the first parish priest, Father Eugene O'Connor, later parish priest of Frankton, had to ride a horse to reach the more remote parts of the parish such as Beach Haven and Paremoremo.

In 1930, Rev. Father John Brennan was appointed first parish priest of St. Mary's, North-

cote, whose territory extended from the boundary with Takapuna on the east to Riverhead (Helensville) on the west, a distance of 18 miles, and from the Waitemata Harbour almost to Dairy Flat (Puhoi) in the north, again a distance of nearly 20 miles — a large parish in an area which is increasing rapidly in population.

In May, 1932, Father John Taylor succeeded Father Brennan, and the following year saw the blessing and opening of the parish school, staffed by the Dominican Nuns from Dunedin.

From April, 1936, until his tragic death at sea on June 17, 1949, the parish was under the care of the greatly loved and widely respected Father Maurice Hunt.

On July 20, 1949, the Rev. Dr. F. H. Terry took up the duties of parish priest until his transfer to Devonport in 1963, and since that time the parish has been under the care of Father P. B. Purcell.

In 1916, the Gladstone Hall and 4½ acres of land in Onewa Road, Northcote, were purchased for £500. The hall, which was erected about 1880, was altered and after blessing by the late Bishop Cleary served as the parish church from the date of its purchase until the end of 1963 when the new church was completed.

This beautiful structure with its striking mosaic murals on the upper external walls and the Stations of the Cross carvings in polished timbers make it an architectural gem. Many tourists and visitors call to see this church.

Although first used for Midnight Mass December 24, 1963, the new church was officially blessed and opened by Archbishop Liston in 1964. The unusual circular (16-sided) design has the advantage that the congregation is brought much closer to the altar than in a more conventional design.

The Parish has always had its own cemetery in Glenfield Road, opposite Pupuke Road. This piece of land was acquired over 100 years ago and the following makes interesting reading:

"Copy of Extract from Deeds Index, Auckland Deeds Office

13th November, 1861

Mr. Philip Callan of the City of Auckland, the Colony of New Zealand, settler, in consideration of the sum of ten shillings sterling paid by the said John Baptist Francis Pompallier, Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland to the said Philip Callan (the receipt whereof is acknowledged) doth hereby convey to the said John Baptist Francis Pompallier all that piece of land containing

The old St. Mary's Catholic Church, Onewa Road, which was moved back on the section and replaced by the unusual but functional and attractive circular building below.







Birkenhead's first Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's, built in Hauraki (now Hinemoa) Street.



The present St. Andrew's, completed in June, 1967.



The first Methodist Church, built about 1880 and later replaced by the large church which today is a landmark at the corner of Onewa and Glenfield roads. The first Birkenhead council meeting took place in the small church pictured here.



St. Peter's Anglican Church, near Verrans Corner. The right half of the building was originally at Chelsea Village and built about 1885. It was moved to Birkdale Road and enlarged in 1967.



a measurement 3 acres, more or less, etc., etc.

To hold the same with the appurtenances unto the said John Baptist Francis Pompallier and his successors, Roman Catholic Bishops of Auckland for ever in trust for the general ecclesiastical purposes of the Roman Catholic church in the Diocese of Auckland."

### **ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Some of the early records of this church have either been destroyed or lost. Birkenhead was originally an outstation of Northcote. At that time Northcote included Birkenhead, Birkdale, Mayfield (now Glenfield), Albany, Greenhithe, and four other outstations as far north as Dairy Flat.

In 1911, a Sunday School was opened in Birkenhead.

On October 24, 1913, a commission from Presbytery met the Birkenhead members of Northcote parish in the Foresters Hall, Birkenhead. This meeting was to ascertain the mind of the people on the question of dividing the parish. They were unanimous that regular services be started in Birkenhead under a home missionary or student.

On January 14, 1914, Birkenhead was disjoined from Northcote and 28 people applied for transfer to Birkenhead. On December 13 of that year the first Birkenhead church was opened. It was about two hundred yards down the right hand side of upper Crescent Road.

In 1928, the church was moved to its present site on the corner of Crescent and Hauraki Roads. Mr. Arnold Paterson was the contractor and the re-opening service was on December 9, 1928.

In earlier days services were held in the old Birkdale school. When Beach Haven became a well settled area services were first held in the home of Mr George Wood, Puriri Road. This was in 1924. Later, the Birkdale public hall on the corner of Lancaster and Puriri Roads was used. When the Beach Haven Methodist Church was opened both denominations shared the same building for a good many years.

In 1956 it was resolved to buy two sections in Birkdale for a church site and these were bought in Birkdale Road.

In November, 1962, the Birkdale church hall was opened and dedicated by the Moderator of the Auckland Presbytery.

By 1967 the Birkenhead church had been enlarged and altered. The Minister in that year was the Rev. Mr. A. Tweedie.

### **ZION HILL METHODIST CHURCH**

This church was the first church to be built in Birkenhead and occupies a commanding site at the intersection of Onewa and Glenfield Roads.

The site was given for that purpose by one of the district's old pioneers, a Mr. Creamer. It has never been used for any other purpose.

The church's first stage was built in 1880 and was designed by William Francis Hammond. The builder was Mr. Charles Johnson. The church was opened free of debt.

Previous to that, the only place for worship was the Selwyn Anglican church in Northcote.

It is recorded that a Presbyterian minister named Mr Allum, gave the church its name. Standing alongside the then new building, he was entranced at the extensive panorama of sea and land. This inspired him to quote the words of the Psalmist —

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth Mt. Zion." Hence the name Zion Hill, and ever since the church has been known as the Zion Hill Methodist church.

The present church (with some alterations and additions) was built in 1885 by Mr. James Llewellyn and designed by Mr. Pickering, an architect. The present schoolroom was built in 1902 by Mr. Fred Souster. Listed below are the names of people who have been prominent in the life of the church over the years:-

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Wilson, and members of the Wilson family, Mr. A. G. Clow, Mr. B. H. Clow, the Utting family, Len Hayman, Judge Button, Laurie Castleton, the Hammonds, Mr. Skeates, Mr. Albert Hadfield and others of that family.

The first Borough Council meeting was held in the Methodist schoolroom and continued being held there with a slight intermission, until the Council Chambers were built in 1906.

Members of the church have played a big part in the cultural and civic life of the Borough since its inception.

For many years this church has made a feature of an annual Birkenhead Old Folks Reunion. Originally it was attached to the Pitt Street circuit and later with Devonport.

The present minister (1969) is the Rev. Mr. Sherson.

### **WILLOW AVENUE CHAPEL**

About 1910, people calling themselves "Open Brethren" began to meet for worship and remembrance, first at the home of the late Mr. R. E. Stott in Onewa Road, and later in the upper room of the Foresters Hall Picture Theatre. The three

**Continued at the foot of page 93**



# Entertainment

A PIONEER of the cinema or "living pictures" in New Zealand was Henry J. Hayward who settled in Birkenhead in a spacious home "The Cliffs", in Hinemoa Street, in 1910.

Mr. Hayward was a widely-travelled, free-minded showman and musician who first toured New Zealand about 1906, as a partner of Mr. T. J. West, with an operatic show entitled "West's Pictures and the Brescians".

In 1908 the cinema increased amazingly in popularity, theatres were built all over New Zealand and to meet the demand, Mr. Hayward formed, firstly "Hayward's Enterprises" and then an amalgamated firm under the title of "The Fuller-Hayward Theatres Corporation".

Silent pictures were shown by Mr. Hayward in the Forester's Hall, Birkenhead, from 1910. This was the main source of entertainment in the Borough and surrounding districts for many years. It was a theatre where the whole family attended the show and it was quite a common sight in the early days to see up to 20 prams in the front lobby under the watchful eye of the doorkeeper.

Mr. Hayward was very considerate to his regular patrons and during the depression of 1931-33 he repeatedly threw open the theatre to those who were unable to find the price of admission.

The talking pictures which arrived in 1929 were continued until 1964 when the Kiwi Cinema, as it was later called, was closed down.

There are many stories still told of the old silent film times at the Birkenhead Cinema and none would be complete without some reference to Edward Patrick Lanigan.

"Ted", as he was so widely known, was an identity there for 15 years, 1913-1928, where he provided the piano accompaniment.

Always well-groomed with high, stiff collar and

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## CHURCHES (Concluded)

foundation members of this Assembly were Mr. and Mrs. Stott and Mrs. F. J. Stewart, but soon others joined until it became imperative that they should own their own premises.

Mrs. Stewart, the owner of two shops and a dwelling at the lower end of Hauraki Road, offered to give the property if the money could be found to convert the building into a chapel. Many of the Assemblies throughout New Zealand willingly gave towards this work and the Hall was opened in 1929.

After about forty years the elders felt that they



Henry J. Hayward, impresario, who gave Birkenhead its first and only cinema.

twirled moustaches he provided the musical background to silent films adapting his music to the moods of films, from the sorrow of the death scene of "Little Nell", the humour of a Charles Chaplin comedy, or the fast movement of a Tom Mix cowboy film.

## BIRKDALE DRAMATIC CLUB

This dramatic club was formed in 1931 and,  
**Continued at the foot of page 94**

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needed larger premises to enable them to cope with the youth work. The Everyboys' and Every-girls' Rallies were being held in the Victoria Hall, which was hired twice weekly for that work.

A section was purchased in a newly-opened street off Mokoia Road called Willow Avenue, and the present chapel was built, mostly by voluntary labour. The building is large enough to hold several hundred people, with rooms downstairs for Sunday School classes and hobbies, and the large main hall can cater for every kind of youth activity, as well as for the usual services of the Chapel.

## Gas

**T**HE Northcote and Birkenhead Gas Company's buildings at Little Shoal Bay were a landmark for over fifty years.

The company was formed in Auckland in April, 1902, to supply gas to Birkenhead and Northcote and the adjacent areas of Waitemata County. When formed the Company had a share capital of £10,000, this was later increased as the company expanded.

A site at the head of Little Shoal Bay between Birkenhead and Northcote was acquired. Comprising 3½ acres, the site had the virtue of being accessible by both land and water and the price was £306. 18. 0.

In the same year, a Mr. Atkinson was appointed to supervise the construction of the plant. The successful tenderers were R. & G. Dempster of Manchester, England. The price was £1,200, freight £100 extra.

In August, 1902, tenders were called for the cast iron pipes needed. Briscoe of Auckland were the successful tenderers at the price of £1,056. 15. 0.

In February, 1903, the various local bodies were informed that the Company would be ready to supply gas for both private and local body use by the end of April.

### ENTERTAINMENT (Concluded)

to obtain a ready-made audience, was open to all to become members or to take part in its productions.

In 1936 the club was given the use of the Brighton Hall at a nominal rental by the owner, Mr. John Bright. Today, the hall is a hardware shop at Verrans Corner.

Membership reached about 150, at least half taking a part in club activities which mainly took the form of acted readings in make-up and costume, and with props. These readings were free to members. They took place in the club's own Brighton Hall and at Glenfield and Birkdale. The club reached a high standard not only in acting but also in lighting, make-up, stage settings and scenery painting.

The club closed down in 1941 when most of the male members joined the forces. Members names that will be remembered by nearly all the older members of the Birkdale community included Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Hane Reich, Mr. Geoff Bentley, Mr. Joe Payne, Mr. D. S. B. Squire, Mr. W. S. Garrett, Mr. Robert Wallace, and Miss Olive Jewell.

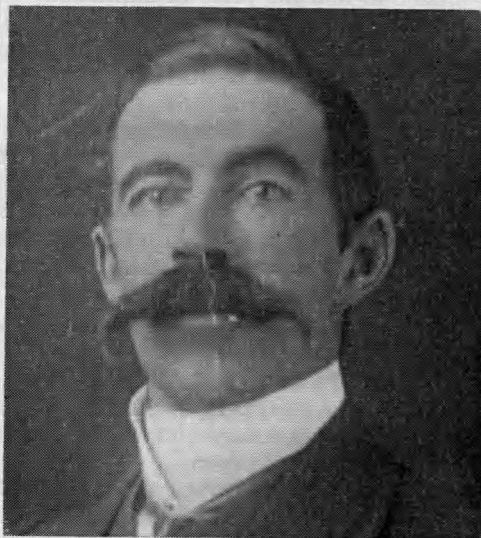
On August 3, 1903, the first statement of accounts was presented to shareholders:

Cost of land 3½ acres - - -	£306	18	0
Buildings - - - - -	785	15	5
Machinery and plant - - -	2,845	12	5
Wages and Construction - -	1,098	15	1
Gas fittings - - - - -	491	19	1
Salary Mr. Atkinson - - -	250	0	0
Formation account - - - -	250	0	0
Preliminary expenses - - -	41	5	0
Legal expenses - - - - -	53	13	6
Office expenditure - - - -	64	14	4
Licence and rates - - - -	6	4	0
Office furniture - - - - -	9	4	0

£6,204 0 10

The Company extended its reticulation progressively and carried on successfully for nearly fifty years, surviving many and various complaints from the public and the local bodies, about the price and quality of the gas, and spoiling the roads with pipe laying.

At one stage it was even proposed that the company should be taken over by the Northcote and Birkenhead Borough Councils and run as a municipal service.



And they cheered him before each performance as he walked briskly down the aisle to his piano to play for the silent movie show — the popular E. P. Lanigan, and so proud of that moustache.

## *Cemeteries*

**A**N inspection of our local cemeteries reveals many familiar pioneer names, names which will always be associated not only with Birkenhead itself, but with the North Shore.

At the intersection of Pupuke and Glenfield Roads there are two cemeteries side by side. One is marked Church of England and the other Roman Catholic. They both had their beginnings in early Birkenhead days.

In the Auckland Diocesan Office is this record: "That that piece of ground was conveyed to the Church of England in 1865 by Mr. Isaac Rhodes Cooper for charitable and religious purposes." But there is no record of it being used as a cemetery until some years later.

The Catholic cemetery is even older. It was sold to Bishop Pompallier in 1861 for 10/-. Here is an extract copied from the Auckland Lands and Deeds Office:

"Mr. Philip Callan settler of Auckland doth hereby convey for 10/- paid by Francis Pompallier, Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, all that piece of land containing three acres more or less, to be held by the said bishop and his successors forever in trust for the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Auckland."

Mr. Philip Callan had a brickmaking yard behind the site of today's bridge toll gates at Northcote.

WHAT IS now known as the Glenfield Cemetery was originally called the Takapuna Cemetery. It was paid for by a government grant which resulted from a resolution passed by the North Shore Roads Board in 1880 at which application

was made to the Government for an allotment of 122 acres to be used as a public cemetery and park.

In 1881 the reserve now known as the Birkenhead Domain, bounded by Eskdale and Glenfield and Domain Roads came into being. It was decided to use 10 acres of it as a cemetery. A board of trustees was elected to control the reserve and the cemetery which faced Eskdale Road. The names of the trustees were Thomas Buddle, Thomas Hilditch, Alexander Wilson, John Johnston and William Francis Hammond.

The first burial was a child of one of the trustees, Mr. John Johnston.

This cemetery was managed by trustees until 1920 when it was handed over to the Birkenhead Council to administer.

The Domain, however, had been under Birkenhead Council control since 1894.

The old part with its wooden and iron railings is a distinct contrast with the new attractively laid-out cemetery. Many trees have been planted, adding much to its appearance.

There is an area set aside for Returned Soldiers as well as for the Church of England. Listed here are a few names, to be found on headstones, of the many Birkenhead pioneers:— Charnon, Chappell, Brooks, Swindail, McPhail, Clow, Goodall, Messenger, Whyte, Wilson, Souster, Kay, Stewart, Verran, McGilp, Lanigan, Kelly, Fitzgerald, Hilditch, Arblaster, Thompson, Hammond, Hawkins.

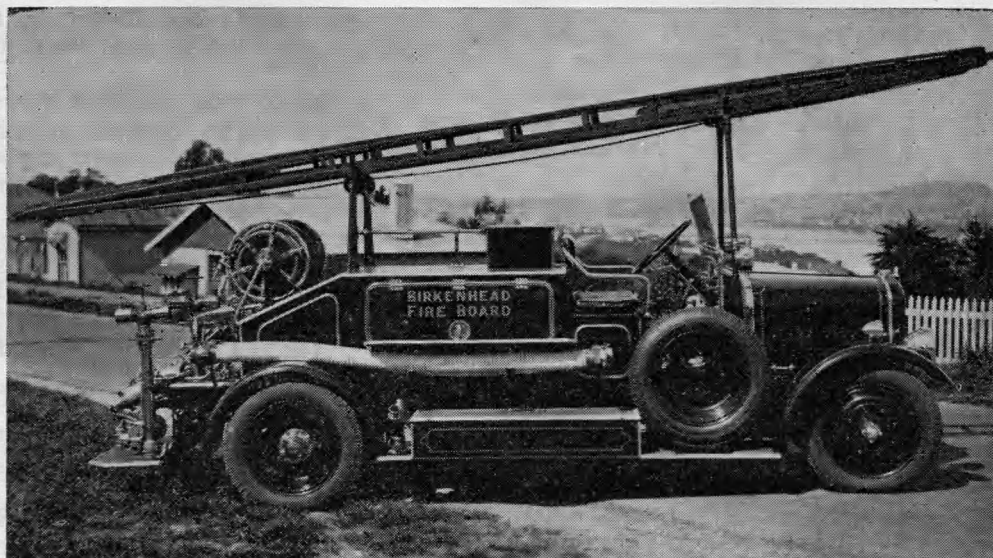
Glenfield Cemetery is the only "open cemetery" on the North Shore, anyone may be buried there. In recent years it has been put on a sound economic basis, by charging an "Out of District" fee which goes into a permanent investment fund. Money is drawn from this fund for the maintenance of the cemetery.



The "new" library and borough council offices at Highbury, opened by the Governor - General in 1968. See page 101.



In 1931 and  
the finest in  
Auckland at  
that time.



Birkenhead Volunteer Fire Brigade, 1931. Left to right, back row: J. Fotheringham (Superintendent), R. Walton, R. Cairns and H. Stott. Middle row: R. Harkin, W. Kymer, H. Campbell, W. Roberts. Front row: J. Smith, G. Turner and "Prince" H. Wilkins (Deputy Superintendent), and W. Atkins.



# Fire Brigade

**P**RIOR to May, 1931, when Birkenhead was gazetted a fire district, the only fire-fighting appliance was a hose reel housed in a box in front of the Council office.

In the late twenties, it became obvious that the growing district was in need of a fire station and a more effective means of dealing with fires was called for.

Thus the Birkenhead Fire Board was formed. Mr. C. H. Wyatt was appointed Chairman, and Mr. H. Kemp the Secretary.

One of their first moves was to raise funds to buy equipment and so it was decided to hold a Queen Carnival. It ran for three months and at a "Coronation Ceremony" in November, 1929, Miss G. Utting (now Mrs. Warth) the Businessmen's "Queen" was crowned. Others taking part in the programme were the Misses G. Cook (later Mrs. Dean), L. McPhail (later Mrs. Chapman) Friendly Society's Queen, and Dot Casey (later Mrs. Hannah) Birkdale Queen, a Miss Leatherheart (later Mrs. Godfrey), Mr. N. Stoakes and Mr. R. Schorrmann, Mesdames Moller, Watson and Wrightson, and Messrs. C. Pattern, Godfrey, Jasper, A. and R. Stott.

The foundation members of the Birkenhead Volunteer Fire Brigade were:—

J. Fotheringham, Superintendent, with W. Atkins, R. Cairns, R. Harkin, G. Jasper, W. Roberts,

J. Smith, H. Stott, G. Turner, R. Walton and H. Wilkins.

For their services, each volunteer was paid £5 per annum.

For the first six months, the volunteers practised in their spare time with the old gear in the Council depot yard. Later the Fire Board ordered a Dennis fire engine from England and when it arrived it made the Birkenhead Brigade the most modern on the shore.

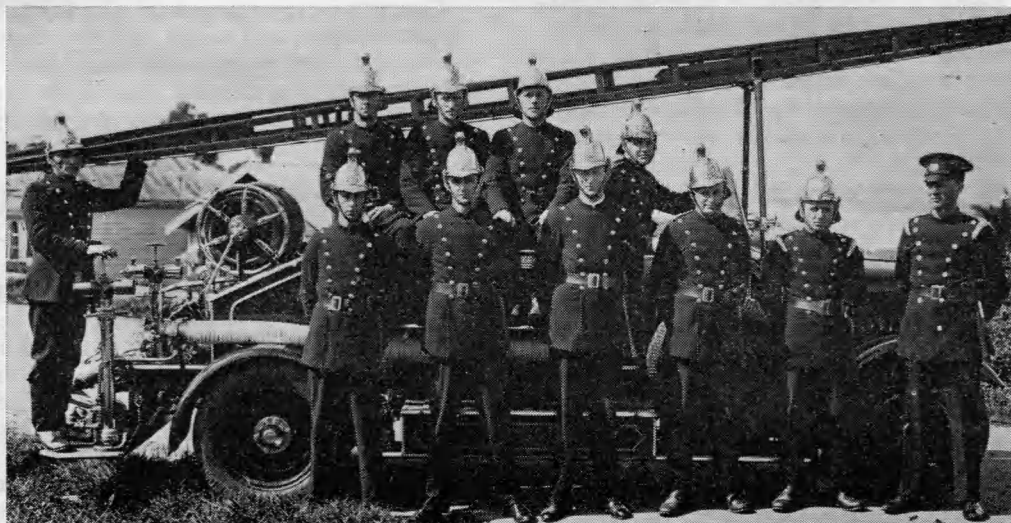
The present fire station was opened in 1931 and built on property bought from Mr. E. G. Skeates.

At the end of 1948, the North Shore Fire Board took over the Birkenhead Fire Brigade and in doing so appointed four permanent firemen and built houses for them to live in behind the station.

The staff now comprises two permanent officers Messrs. H. Morgan and R. Sidey and Senior fireman driver C. Poland and Senior fireman driver R. Blennerhassett—and 17 volunteers: Messrs. W. Smith, 1st officer, Garry Squires, 2nd officer, John Malcolm, Secretary Volunteer Brigade, Firemen Les Boyce (Gold Star for 25 years' service, and all in Birkenhead), D. Halcrow, T. Smith, B. Wolfenden, R. Wolfenden, W. McSkimming, M. Kelly, A. Hargreaves, K. Crossdale, M. Warbank, R. Stanley, C. J. Poland, W. Lebourne and E. Merz.

To judge by the trophies and shields displayed in the Brigade building, the Birkenhead Brigade has reached a very high standard indeed.

The same brigade in uniform and the new "appliance" delivered in 1931. From left to right, Fireman J. Smith with his hand on the ladder, then in front Firemen Atkins, Cairns, Stott and Harkins, and deputy Superintendent Wilkins, and at far right, Superintendent Fotheringham. At back Firemen Campbell, Turner, Keymer and Roberts.



# CLUBS . . .

## Past and Present

### **BIRKDALE GIRLS' CLUB**

THOSE WHO were instrumental in forming the club in 1920 were Mesdames Usher, Williams and Miss I. Brown.

Weekly meetings were held in the Methodist hall in Birkdale Road. The Birkdale Guides was formed from this Club and Mrs. Williams and Miss Vera Croll were active participants in the movement.

Names of some of the first guides were: Doris Hayman (Mrs. Walton), Kate Dadson (Mrs. Hyam), Flo and Winnie Taylor, Ella Brown, Nell Fisher and G. Utting (Mrs. Warth).

### **BIRKENHEAD GUIDES**

PRIOR TO the formation of the Birkenhead Guide Company in 1927, a Young Citizens' League used to meet regularly in the Zion Hill Church Hall.

The Birkenhead Company was started by Mrs. Flora Taylor who was Captain, and Mrs. Usher, Commissioner.

Girls from the Young Citizens' League were absorbed in the Birkenhead Guide Company, the first Committee of which was: Chairman, Mrs. Gilfillan; secretary and treasurer, Miss Helen Taylor; committee, Mesdames Triste, Atkins, Leahy, Norton and Davenport.

Patrol Leaders were Roberta Taylor, Joyce Atkins, Maise Edwards, Alma Newman, Rene Woods, and patrol second, Frances Tothill. Miss Gertie Utting was lieutenant.

Mrs. Taylor remained Guide Captain until 1932.

### **BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

THE ASSOCIATION was formed in 1952 to promote good business in the borough. The first president was Mr. B. L. Brown who died in office. Mr. R. Callan succeeded him.

At the present time (1967) Mr. R. Moller is the Association's president, Mr. R. F. Brook, vice president, and Mr. Kirkby, secretary.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS' CLUB**

THE BIRKDALE Countrywomen's Institute was instrumental in forming the Senior Citizens'

Club, and the Lions Club have sponsored it.

The first meeting was held in the R.S.A. Hall on August 12, 1963, when approximately 100 attended including the then Mayor, Mr. A. C. Croombe.

A Social meeting is held once a month and over the three years to 1966 the membership had grown to 224.

Their aim at the present time is to purchase clubrooms near Highbury where members may drop-in to make a cup of tea and have a game of cards or indoor bowls — or just a rest. By the end of 1967, \$1,600 had been put by for this project.

The office bearers (1967) are:—J. E. Goulden, president; A. Bagnall, secretary; and Mrs. A. F. Johnson, treasurer.

### **ST. JOHN AMBULANCE**

A CADET Nursing Division was formed in the Borough in 1944. Mrs. Marsden, the first Cadet Superintendent was followed by Mrs. Fowler.

### **PROGRESSIVE LEAGUE**

THE INAUGURAL meeting of the League was held in the Foresters Hall on March 14, 1921.

The aim of the League, which is no longer active, was to promote public welfare of the borough. Mr. J. W. Court was the first President and 12 members were elected to form a committee.

The League interested itself in such matters as improving Hinemoa Park, bathing facilities at Needles Eye (a distinctive rock off Birkenhead which has since been worn away by the sea), and Kauri Park entrance.

Concerts were arranged to raise funds for these various projects and at the last recorded meeting, on April 5, 1923, discussion had centred around the proceeds of a concert held in aid of the Soldiers' War Memorial at Highbury. Mr. E. le Roy was then President.

### **BEACH HAVEN — BIRKDALE GARDEN CIRCLE AND BEAUTIFYING SOCIETY**

MR. W. J. HILDER was instrumental in forming the Beach Haven Garden Circle in 1955.

Many corners of Beach Haven have been beautified through the hard work and enthusiasm of the members of this Society. There is an annual flower show in November which attracts much interest and is recognised as a first-class, North Shore show.

The Society began without funds and it is a great tribute to those associated with it that today



they own all the equipment necessary for running a flower show.

In addition, £75 is invested in the local Ratepayers' Hall debentures.

Through the generosity of various people and organisations listed below the Society owns several trophies which are competed for annually: Ratepayers' Association Cup, the; Garden Circle Shield (made locally), the; Mrs. Agnes Schorman Cup, the; Mrs. Newman (Whangarei) Cup; and the Hilder Memorial Cup for the best garden in the district each year.

The present (1967) President is Miss C. M. Gunter.

### ANCIENT ORDER OF FORESTERS

COURT BIRKENHEAD, No. 8886, of the Ancient Order of Foresters, in the Auckland District, was officially opened on August 10, 1901, with a membership of 21. The first Chief Ranger was Brother T. Allen, and the first Secretary Brother P. Brewster. Membership increased until in 1929 there were 121 members.

In 1933, with the membership at 116, the Court had its own Medical Officers, Dr. H. K. Holdgate, Birkenhead, and Dr. R. Dudding, Northcote. Its chemists were R. O. White and B. L. Brown, Birkenhead, and W. T. Chapman, Northcote.

The introduction of Social Security, the Depression, and the Second World War started a decline in all Friendly Society activities, and gradually by 1963, the membership had dropped to 32, many of whom lived out of the area, and were unable to attend meetings.

Consequently in that year, the Court at Birkenhead was closed, and the members transferred to Court Takapuna.

### WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

THE FIRST meeting was held on April 27, 1948, and at the close of the first year's operations there were 87 financial members. Mesdames G. Warth and H. Hadwick were instrumental in starting the branch in Birkenhead.

Over the years they have occupied themselves making soft toys for hospitals and entertaining such groups or organisations as the Senior Citizens, Happiness Club and Oakley Hospital patients. They also make an annual contribution to the I.H.C.

At the present time there are 78 financial

members which indicates a lively interest in the group. The 1966 Executive comprised Mesdames G. Warth, President; H. Hadwick and W. Carson, vice presidents; R. O'Callahan, secretary; and T. Mooney, treasurer.

### WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THIS ASSOCIATION came to life during the depression days of the early 1930s when Mrs. Mills was the Mayoress.

The activities were similar to those carried out by the Women's Institute today and, in addition, there was a very good drama group within the association.

During the depression years members did a great deal of sewing and the President, Mrs. Osborne (who was later the Mayoress) gave wholehearted support to the association. She was also most generous with the material she gave to be made up.

Mrs. Gilfillan was the first secretary, and the association flourished through the war years almost up to the time the Birkenhead Women's Institute was formed in 1948.

### WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

This branch has the distinction of being the second formed on the North Shore (the first was Greenhithe). It was formed in 1928 when Mrs. Irwin from Greenhithe called a meeting at Birkdale.

The foundation members were:— Mesdames Bartlett, Williams, Bishop, Moller, Schorman, Thomas, Wood and Reich, and Miss Ward.

Mrs. Wood was in charge of sewing and material given to the Institute by the Hospital Auxillary was made into garments. Meetings were held monthly in the Public Hall, at the corner of Puriri and Lancaster Roads, and during the depression years members worked hard helping to feed and clothe the unemployed.

Each year has had its drama group and singing circle and they have gained much success in this field.

In 1964 the Birkdale Institute sponsored a Korean girl, 11 years old. They planned to continue educating Shu-a-Cha until she was able to take up worthwhile employment.

Other activities include making peggy squares for the Auckland Hospital, and toys and bed sox for patients in Cornwall Hospital.

The membership is about 40 and the committee consists of:— Mesdames P. R. Burrell, Watson,

Hampton, Bagnall, Deadman, Holdsworth, Painting, Burnett and Randle.

### **WAITEMATA HOCKEY CLUB**

later re-named

### **BIRKENHEAD HOCKEY CLUB**

FORMED IN Birkenhead by Mr. Hugh Patrick in 1910, the club went into recess during World War I, all fit members being in the forces. It was re-formed in 1920 by the enthusiasts who returned from the War.

The club was finally absorbed by the North Shore Club about 1947, after winning many championships in the various grades. One third grade team made history for the Auckland Hockey Association by scoring 103 goals in one season and only 16 against.

There was also a keen ladies' club.

### **CYCLING CLUB**

The club was formed in 1934 by a Mr. "Brownie" Sharp and was known as the Beachhaven Amateur Cycling Club. Mr. E. J. Osborne was president (1935) with Mr. A. Evans as secretary and Mr. C. Inwards as handicapper.

After World War II the name of the club was changed to Birkenhead Amateur Cycling Club.

Mr. E. Fitzgerald, a member for more than 30 years, has the honour of being a life member of the Auckland Amateur Cycling Centre.

The club is still very active and has 11 registered members besides a host of unregistered members.

Highlights of club and members' achievements are:— Ashley Blunden, winner Auckland unplaced championship 1950; the club won the Auckland teams championship 1952 with A. Blunden, J. Blunden, N. Grieve, T. R. Harvey, and J. Peoples.

In six consecutive years the club had representatives in the Auckland team.

John Peoples was selected to represent N.Z. at the Empire Games in 1958 at Cardiff. Ashley Blunden won the race Palmerston North to Wellington. John Peoples was an outstanding rider after his return from Cardiff and had many successes including the N.Z. 100 miles.

At least two other junior riders were outstanding — Jim Thompson and Dennis Dwyer.

Russ Hilder was the first clubman to achieve fastest time open to all comers at Dargaville.

### **BIRKDALE TENNIS CLUB**

Before 1923 Birkdale had a tennis club but to a large extent it relied on the generosity of the Birkdale School and Mr. Rainsford, for the use of their private courts.

In 1923, a small committee consisting of Pat McGovern, Len Usher and W. S. Garrett approached the Council and were given permission to develop the area at the back of the reservoir to use as tennis courts.

They soon gathered together a strong voluntary labour force and in the summer of 1924 the first court was opened.

The membership was 30 at that time.

During the depression full advantage was taken of the labour offered by relief workers. Under the driving force of the then secretary, Mr. E. J. Osborne, club members built a handsome pavilion with three terraced courts and the membership soon grew to 60.

This club has functioned for 42 years without a break — the only sporting body in any code in Birkdale with this distinction.

Mr. W. S. Garrett was president of the club from 1924 to 1945 — 21 years.

## ***BAPTISTS BEGAN IN A HOME***

The Birkdale Baptist Fellowship began in the district in 1948 when a Sunday School was begun in the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. Dornach.

The original church was built in 1952 and used as a Sunday School and church until about 1960. In that year a hall was moved from Milford to a site behind the original

building in Verbena Road, Birkdale.

Since then the original hall has been extended and renovated and used solely as a church. The hall brought from Milford is the Sunday School building.

There have been three permanent ministers since 1960: Dr. A. J. Taylor, the Rev. Peter Carter and the Rev. Clyde Smith.

# Red Cross

**A**N ACTIVE branch of the Red Cross was formed in Birkenhead in 1938, incorporating a Voluntary Aid Detachment, with women and men members. Sewing circles and other activities were continued till late in 1945.

When war broke out in 1939, the Red Cross was ready to turn the Birkenhead Primary School into a 20-bed hospital manned by the Voluntary Aid Detachment.

Miss V. Croll was Lady Superintendent. She conducted classes in Home Nursing and directed the making of hospital requisites. Meetings were held every week and members had to return home in unlighted streets owing to the "black-out" period.

Dr. Keith Holgate took some of the First Aid classes and a town member took the hygiene and sanitation instructions.

The sewing circle met weekly during the war and some of the members were Mesdames Hadfield, Ingster, Gilfillan, Fregard, Hyde, Martin, Paterson, Prickett, Reich, Swan and Tilley, and the Misses Geddes. Layettes were always on hand and an emergency cupboard was filled with clothes in case of any disaster. In one year, 542 garments were made and 582 hospital requisites, which would be used at the School Hospital and Advanced Dressing Station which was manned

by the Men's Detachment. General training of rescue work was undertaken as well as First Aid, stretcher-bearing and hospital duty at the Casualty wards in the city. Sunday parades with the 1st Field Ambulance were attended. Messrs. Adam, Ashby and Harkin were leaders.

The Red Cross undertook training of wardens in First Aid, in connection with Emergency Precautions and Emergency Police.

Over one hundred members took classes in First Aid.

Opportunity was made for members to attend Westfield Casualty room to help and observe.

The spinning circle was very productive and many garments were knitted from home-spun wool and sent overseas. These garments were much in demand and letters were received from Greece, to mention one country, thanking the donors and asking for more.

Mesdames Carson and Klingender were Commandants of Detachment and Miss Jewel was an assistant. Some well-known Birkenhead names were members: Mesdames Ashby, Atkins, Atkinson, Hollows, Honeycombe, Henley, Inwards, McAnally, Norton, Paterson, Donohoe, Reich, Roberts, Service, Shuttleworth, Saddington, Symons, Tout, Carson, Williams and Wilson. Misses Bell, Berry, Carson, Fisher, W. & R. & O. Jewel, Neben and Dowsing, Ross and Collard.

After the war, parcels were sent to civilians in Great Britain.

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# Library

**A**T a meeting in 1901 the Birkenhead Borough Council resolved that a proposal to build a town hall and public library should be considered by its legal and finance committee. Little more was heard of the project until June 23, 1902, when, at a public meeting, a recommendation was adopted that steps should be taken to obtain a Government subsidy of £100 for a building not to exceed a total of £600, and that, since it was King Edward VII's coronation year, the new building would be called Coronation Hall.

It was not until more than 45 years later that the question of a library came before the borough council again. Then, in 1949, a public library was established in the basement of the council chambers. It is recorded that "generous help from the National Library Service and enthusiastic co-operation by local voluntary helpers made it possible".



Birkenhead Rotary Club members dismantling the roof of the old council chambers August 19, 1967. Left to right: Gary Squire, Noel Stewart (Police), Don Curel and Bernie Nelson.



Stacking up the salvage.  
Left to right: Rotary  
President Ray Russell,  
Charles Innes, Wilf Dil,  
Peter Taylor, and Jack  
Kendall.



Mrs. John Wilson and Mrs. Joan Foggins were the first paid, part-time librarians. In 1952 the present librarian, Miss Eleanor Fisher was appointed full time.

A steady growth of custom has been maintained. Issue of books during the first year was 26,615. By 1968 the number of issues had increased to some 125,000 a year. Children have been particularly well catered for.

While subscription libraries had been operating on the North Shore for many years, Birkenhead's was the first public library to be opened. Devonport followed in 1954, and Takapuna and Northcote in 1956.

The present library and council chambers building was built in 1968 and opened by the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt.

## Mayor and Benefactor

MR. E. J. OSBORNE was the 14th Mayor of Birkenhead and served from 1936 - 1953, 17 years, the longest term of any mayor in the borough.

He was responsible for many improvements in the borough during his term, but is perhaps better remembered for his generous gifts of time and money to provide borough facilities.

He was founder of the Birkenhead Citizens War Memorial Committee and its chairman up to the time of his death. He was not only responsible for raising most of the money for the cost of the park, but donated \$12,000 himself.

The Osborne Memorial Swimming Pool to which the family donated \$32,000 after his death will be an everlasting monument to the man himself.

He was awarded the M.B.E. for his civic and community efforts.

Mr. E. J.  
Osborne



He was patron of many sporting bodies and president of numerous others.

His efforts in raising money for all causes are legendary.

His last few years were spent in blindness, but he still maintained a keen interest in local affairs and attended all sessions at the Memorial Park skating rink where he was well known and respected by the children.

# Birkenhead's Trust Hotel

WHEN the Licensing Amendment Act, which was intended to up-date and bring some order into the liquor laws of this country, was passed in 1953 it seemed the lawmakers had conceded that one or two areas or places might find they did not fit definitions in the Act. As no one could foresee what the circumstances might be at some later date in any one of these particular cases, the Act got around it by providing for, in one of the most sweeping of generalities, undefined "Special Areas".

Birkenhead had the misfortune to discover, nearly 10 years later, that it was a "Special Area". This was to give Birkenhead people a great deal of trouble and cost them a great deal of money.

In mid-1962, early in the term of a new and progressive thinking borough council, the town clerk was instructed to investigate liquor licensing in Birkenhead. Those close to the council knew that its members had in mind a trust hotel, the profits from which could be applied to improving the amenities of the borough.

## Others

Mount Wellington Borough and Invercargill City councils, to quote two, were local authorities already involved in operating trust hotels. But, as the Birkenhead Borough Council was soon to learn, neither of these successful ventures were in the same licensing category — under the 1953 Amending Act — as Birkenhead. Mount Wellington had been able to build a licensed trust hotel in an area in which the licensed trade already operated — and therefore competed — and the Invercargill Trust which was founded before the Amendment Act was passed, held the monopoly of licences, and had become the licensing control authority in its own area.

The Birkenhead Borough Council, before it knew what the true position was, wanted to establish a trust board that could not only build and operate its own hotel but also have the right to any future licences granted in the district, a district in which there were no other licensed premises. In Northcote and Takapuna yes, but not Birkenhead.

This was the situation that gave rise to considerable misinformed argument about "wet" and "dry" areas.

The controversy was the result, in many ways, of the New Zealand electoral system whereby, to provide an even distribution of voters, electoral boundaries are periodically changed. In 1928 Birkenhead became part of the Auckland Suburbs electorate, in which in 1908 people had voted against licences in the district.

## Status Change

But, in 1908, Birkenhead had been in Waitemata and had not participated in the licence poll.

Then there was another change of electoral boundaries, in 1937, and Birkenhead found it had been returned to the Waitemata electorate which, by this time, was an ordinary licensing district. But, as explained above, the Birkenhead people had never had the opportunity to vote "wet" or "dry". In other words, being neither "wet" nor "dry", Birkenhead was a "special area" and a poll would be necessary to decide whether the people of the borough wanted Birkenhead to be "wet" or not.

To start the ball rolling, the Birkenhead Borough Council arranged, late in 1962, to discuss the whole matter with the Licensing Control Commission and any interests that might be affected in a business way by the establishment of a Trust Hotel in the district. By the end of 1963 no liquor trade interests had made a move but the Council had received three petitions from its ratepayers asking for a poll and, if it proved to be successful, a trust hotel.

The licensing Control Commission, when informed of this, told the Council it would hold a public inquiry in July, 1964. This took place and three months later, September 10, it advised the Council that subject to a poll it "was of the opinion that the issue of a hotel premises licence should be authorised in Birkenhead". It should be noted that it did not comment on the trust hotel proposal. It did advise, though, that the poll should be in two parts. First, for or against a licence being issued, and second — if the first were carried — for trust control or not.

This poll was held on May 1, 1965. The result was overwhelmingly in favour of a licence being granted and that the licence should be for a trust hotel.

## Not so

It would seem, at that point, that the matter had been decided and all would be plain sailing. Far from it. Two weeks after the successful poll, the Secretary of Justice informed the council that the application of existing legal provisions

in the circumstances was "not an easy question" and that special regulations would have to be made in Birkenhead's case.

In view of the difficulties and delays already experienced, the Council was most disturbed at this turn of events. As a result a request to the then Minister of Justice, the late Mr. J. R. Hanan, for an interview, was sent off immediately and on July 22, 1965, the Mayor, Mr. A. C. Crocombe, the chairman of the Trust Board Steering Committee, Mr. J. J. Southcombe, the M.P. for Waitemata, Mr. N. J. King, and the town clerk, Mr. P. H. Kortegast went to Wellington and discussed the matter with Mr. Hanan, in his office at Parliament House.

This ended with the Minister authorising a press statement to the effect that a suburban trust and not a local trust would be established at Birkenhead and, if necessary, the law should be amended to make it possible. There would also have to be an election for members of a Trust Board.

### Disappointment

But, a few days later, to the consternation of the Council, the Minister made a complete about-face. He informed the Council on August 13 that he had been advised that the licence at Birkenhead would have to be "not a suburban trust but a local trust, on the Mount Wellington model".

The Minister also said that the Government would neither introduce any legislation to give the Birkenhead licence the status of a suburban trust nor alter the procedure for establishing it. The next step, the Minister said, would be for the Licensing Control Commission to call for applications for a licence.

If the Birkenhead Borough Council wished to continue with its trust proposals it would, the Minister said, like any other applicant, have to find a site for a hotel, prepare plans and specifications, and apply for the licence on the as yet unformed trust board's behalf.

This was a serious set-back for the Council. Not only was it doubtful if the legislation, by which its previous moves had been made, was pertinent, but a local trust on the Mount Wellington model was a licence issued in an area that already supported a licence or licences held by the liquor trade, in which case the trust board would have to pay into a special fund an "upset goodwill" amount.

If the establishment of a suburban trust had been permitted, the board could have built an hotel in stages and used profits from the sale of liquor

to help finance the complete hotel, and no goodwill would have had to be paid.

This insistence by the Minister — for reasons which are difficult to follow — that the licence should after all be a "local trust" has resulted in the requirement to build, before a cent of revenue has been received, an hotel project costing about \$750,000. Of this total, \$40,000 would be for goodwill.

### Private Bill

The Borough Council made a valiant effort to reverse the Minister's decision, even to the extent of introducing a Private Members' Bill, the Birkenhead Licensing Trust Bill, which would have enabled the Council to establish the preferred Suburban Trust.

Representations were made to the Prime Minister, the Licensing Control Commission and to Government Committees. Mr. King gave notice of intention to introduce the bill on June 1, 1966. The Mayor and the Council's solicitor attended a meeting of the Bills Committee in August, a deputation to the Prime Minister was arranged — but it did not take place because bad weather grounded all aircraft between Auckland and Wellington on the particular day — and a comprehensive file of information and press cuttings was prepared and copies sent to all members of Parliament.

The whole question received extensive publicity, largely through the efforts of a "Save the Trust Committee", but when the second reading of the Bill was introduced into the House by Mr. King on Friday, August 19, the Speaker rejected the Bill on the grounds that "it involved an appropriation".

By letter dated Monday, August 22 — it certainly couldn't have been sooner and a local wag suggested it was rather like a small boy sticking out his tongue after getting his own way — the Deputy Prime Minister, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, wrote to the Council to say: "The law as it stands provides that all licences authorised by the Commission at Birkenhead shall be granted to a local trust".

The Council could do nothing but try to make the best of it and set about finding a suitable site for an hotel. Various suggestions were investigated including: the possibility of combining it with Highbury's off-street parking plan; purchasing six State Advances properties in Hammond Place; purchasing an area behind the Kiwi Theatre at Highbury. Each was turned down by some authority.



After many meetings and discussions a site was finally found which the Council felt would meet any objection raised either by the Government or the Licensing Control Commission. The Council arranged with Chelsea Estates Ltd., the subdividers of the New Zealand Sugar Company land, to purchase five acres facing Mokoia Road, an area which could possibly be next to some future commercial parking area.

### Agreement

The price of this land was put at \$120,000, an amount equal to the Reserves Contribution that would have to be paid by the subdividers. Details were set out and agreed to by both parties and presented to the Licensing Control Commission at a public sitting on November 8, 1966. Even then, although the Council's application for a licence was the only one to be put forward, the Commission reserved its decision on the grounds that the negotiations to buy the site had not been completed to the Commission's satisfaction.

Further negotiations with Chelsea Estates Ltd., were begun and a final agreement was forwarded to the Commission a few days before Christmas. Two and a half months went by, and then, on March 17, 1967, five years after the Birkenhead Borough Council had made its first move to provide Birkenhead with a trust hotel, the Control Commission advised that a licence was being arranged.

The only move left for the Council to make was to publicly notify the trust hotel project, and call for objections under the Town and Country Planning Act. Objections closed on March 29 and were dealt with in time for an election of a Trust Board to be held on May 20, 1967.

Six members were elected from 21 candidates, and when the new board was able to assure the Commission that it approved the site chosen and the plans made by the Council the licence was finally granted. The first board members were: Messrs. R. N. Currie (chairman), N. T. Potter, J. Bracken, J. D. Chicken, T. H. Davidson, and A. M. Nola, with the Town Clerk, Mr. P. H. Kortegast as secretary.

The hotel, for which site preparation was begun early in 1969, fronts on to Mokoia Road. The layout of the grounds provides a tree-lined road giving access from Mokoia Road to stepped parking levels and the future wholesale department.

Access to the motel units will be both by car and by a covered footpath from the hotel. The view from the units will be across the sugar company land to the city on the other side of the harbour.

Bars have been designed to be of a small intimate size and located along the north and west faces of the main buildings to ensure maximum sunshine in the afternoon. Two bars open to sheltered terraces. A functions room leads to a diningroom and a sheltered, covered deck that can be used for outside dining. A spectacular view, particularly at night, can be obtained from these spaces.

### Movement

The service areas have been kept to the centre of the building thus enabling the peripheral areas to be used for public spaces. This also ensures that both guest and bar patrons can readily move from space to space and enjoy all the amenities of the building with ease.

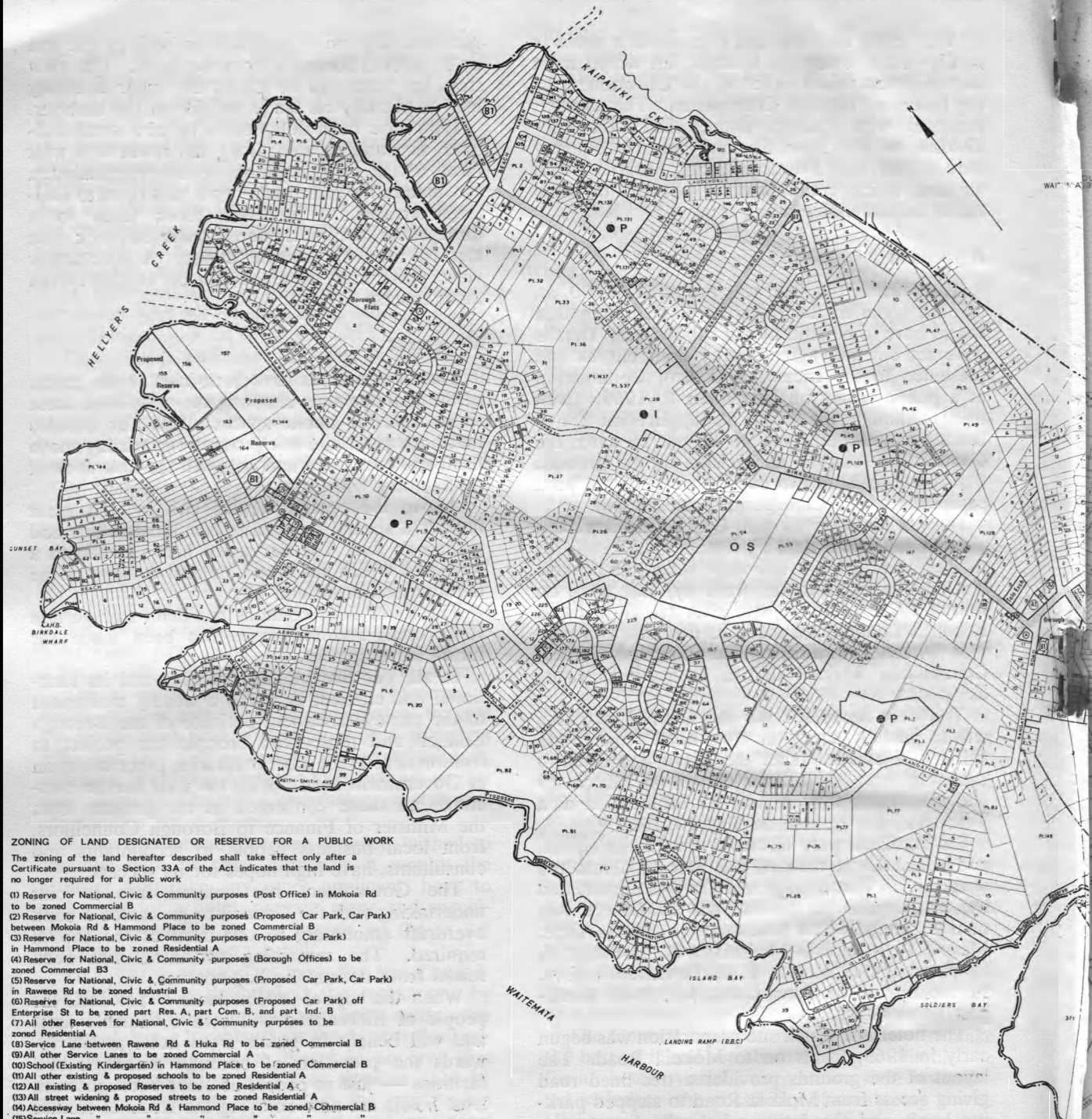
Above the central service core of the main floor is a special mezzanine bar, Trust office and manager's flat. The bar space here extends to a roof deck which has broad, extensive views of the harbour and Auckland city.

The lower floor contains the main storage and staff rooms and allowance has been made for future development.

In all, this fine looking building and its functional and efficient layout is a worthy monument to the perseverance and patience of the Borough Council and those who brought the project to fruition despite the most frustrating procrastination at Government level. With the final hurdle overcome, all those concerned in the project, from the Minister of Finance to Borough Councillors, from local business people to accountants and consultants, have high hopes for its success.

The Government has entered into a joint undertaking with the Council to guarantee a bank overdraft amounting to one-third of the capital required. The remaining two-thirds has been raised from normal lending sources.

When the capital indebtedness is paid off, the people of Birkenhead will own a valuable asset and will benefit in grants from hotel profits towards the provision of borough amenities and facilities — just as people of other boroughs with trust hotels are now enjoying the fruits of similar projects.



**ZONING OF LAND DESIGNATED OR RESERVED FOR A PUBLIC WORK**

The zoning of the land hereafter described shall take effect only after a Certificate pursuant to Section 33A of the Act indicates that the land is no longer required for a public work

- (1) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Post Office) in Mokoia Rd to be zoned Commercial B
- (2) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park, Car Park) between Mokoia Rd & Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (3) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park) in Hammond Place to be zoned Residential A
- (4) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Borough Offices) to be zoned Commercial B3
- (5) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park, Car Park) in Raweoe Rd to be zoned Industrial B
- (6) Reserve for National, Civic & Community purposes (Proposed Car Park) off Enterprise St to be zoned part Res. A, part Com. B, and part Ind. B
- (7) All other Reserves for National, Civic & Community purposes to be zoned Residential A
- (8) Service Lane between Raweoe Rd & Huka Rd to be zoned Commercial B
- (9) All other Service Lanes to be zoned Commercial A
- (10) School (Existing Kindergarten) in Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (11) All other existing & proposed schools to be zoned Residential A
- (12) All existing & proposed Reserves to be zoned Residential A
- (13) All street widening & proposed streets to be zoned Residential A
- (14) Accessway between Mokoia Rd & Hammond Place to be zoned Commercial B
- (15) Service Lane " " " " " "

**NOTE**  
See Appendix J of the Code of Ordinances for detailed zoning and designations of land adjoining Mokoia Road, Hinemoa Street and Birkenhead Avenue Intersections (Highbury Corner)

Building Line Limit of Height Restriction relating to Hobsonville Airport Plan TP 13260

# BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH DISTRICT SCHEME

FIRST REVIEW  
 SERIES DISTRICT PLANNING MAP

SUBJECT ZONING DESIGNATIONS AND  
 COMMUNICATIONS

SCALE 0 4 8 16 24 CHAINS

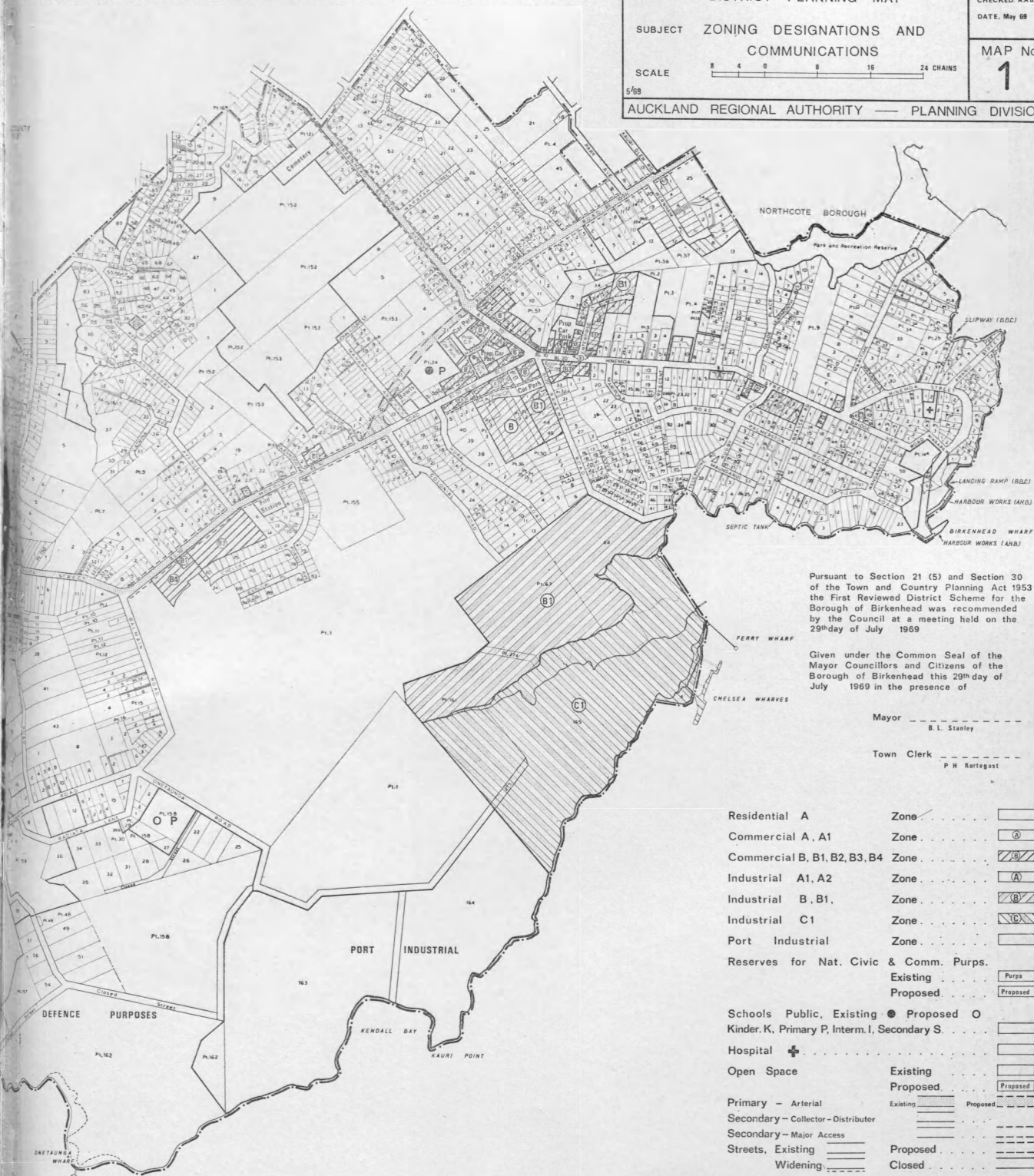
5/68

AUCKLAND REGIONAL AUTHORITY — PLANNING DIVISION

DRAWN J.B.M.  
 CHECKED A.A.B.  
 DATE, May 68

MAP No

1



Pursuant to Section 21 (5) and Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1953 the First Reviewed District Scheme for the Borough of Birkenhead was recommended by the Council at a meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of July 1969

Given under the Common Seal of the Mayor Councillors and Citizens of the Borough of Birkenhead this 29<sup>th</sup> day of July 1969 in the presence of

Mayor ————  
 B. L. Stanley

Town Clerk ————  
 P. H. Kortgast

Residential A	Zone	
Commercial A, A1	Zone	
Commercial B, B1, B2, B3, B4	Zone	
Industrial A1, A2	Zone	
Industrial B, B1,	Zone	
Industrial C1	Zone	
Port Industrial	Zone	
Reserves for Nat. Civic & Comm. Purps.		
Existing		
Proposed		
Schools Public, Existing	●	
Proposed	○	
Kinder. K, Primary P, Intern. I, Secondary S		
Hospital	+	
Open Space		
Existing		
Proposed		
Primary - Arterial	Existing	
Secondary - Collector - Distributor	Existing	
Secondary - Major Access	Existing	
Streets, Existing	Proposed	
Widening	Closed	
Service Lanes		
Building Lines		
District Boundary		